

**Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey  
Reconnaissance Survey Final Report  
of  
Logan County, Nebraska  
prepared for  
Nebraska State Historical Society  
State Historic Preservation Office**

**by**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey**

The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NEHBS) is an ongoing project of the State Historic Preservation Office. Since its beginnings in 1974 with limited fieldwork by staff and student interns, NEHBS has expanded from a few thousand sites in urban and rural areas to over 40,000 recorded properties in three-fourths of the state. By 1992, the office plans to cover the entire state.

Through its documentation of the state's historic and architectural resources, NEHBS provides a basis for historic preservation in Nebraska. Survey data is used to list buildings in the National Register, which in turn may result in recognition and preservation. NEHBS data is also used to determine needs for further documentation and planning for the state's historic places. A brief description of Historic Preservation Office programs follows.

Equally important, while contributing to the history of the entire state, the survey also promotes local and regional awareness of significant buildings and sites. County officials, historical societies, planning organizations, and individuals are encouraged to use the information for community development, tourism, and historic preservation in their own communities.

### **National Register**

The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, which documents historic buildings and places throughout the state, also identifies those that may qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Established in 1966, the National Register is America's official inventory of sites, buildings, and districts, recognized for their importance to national, state, and local history. To qualify for listing, properties must be at least

fifty (50) years old and have associations with one or more of the following: historic events, significant individuals, architecture, or future research potential.

### **Tax Incentive Program**

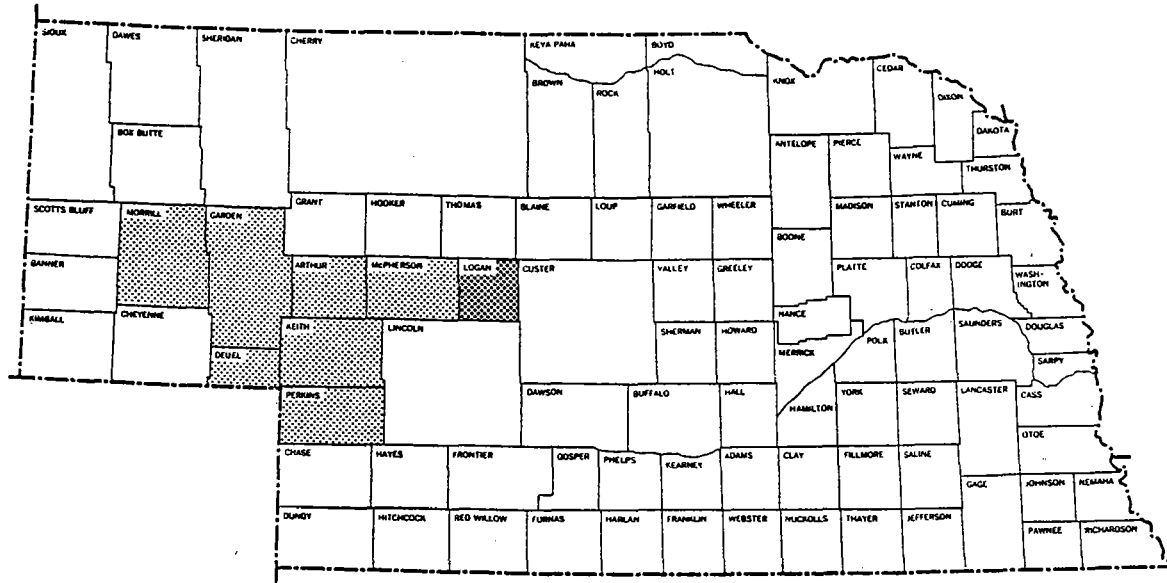
Inclusion in the National Register may enable income-producing properties to qualify for federal tax credits as certified rehabilitation projects. Designed to encourage the reuse and revitalization of historic buildings, neighborhoods, and "main street" districts, the tax incentives have been available since 1976. The program seeks to promote the reuse of historic buildings, including community redevelopment efforts and economic opportunities by retaining the distinctive qualities of buildings or districts.

### **Review and Compliance**

The Historic Buildings Survey is an important source of information for the State Historic Preservation Office and government agencies when complying with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Commonly referred to as "review and compliance," Section 106 was established to ensure the documentation and protection of buildings and sites which may be affected by any federally funded or licensed project, such as highway construction. NEHBS survey data enables preservation staff and federal agencies to evaluate potentially affected properties and upon evaluation, to seek methods to mitigate the effect of these projects on important resources.

These and other programs are administered in Nebraska by the State Historic Preservation Office. Additional information may be obtained by contacting the office.

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### Western Nebraska Sandhills and High Plains Survey Area

The architectural research firm of Save America's Heritage was selected by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NESHPO) and engaged in a contractual agreement to conduct the Western Nebraska Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey. The survey consisted of the completed preliminary fieldwork in eight western Nebraska counties: Morrill, Deuel, Perkins, Keith, Garden, Arthur, McPherson, and Logan. Initiated in September, 1989, the survey was completed in the summer of 1990. With the completion of the eight-county project, the Western Nebraska Sandhills and High Plains were the third region of the state to be completed under the NESHPO's plan for preliminary statewide coverage by 1991-92.

The primary objective of the survey was to provide a preliminary characterization of the historic material resources extant in the western Nebraska region. Another primary objective of the survey was the identification of a definitive group of historic properties judged eligible or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The Historic Buildings Survey of Logan County has accomplished this goal by identifying a total of 18 historic properties considered eligible or potentially eligible for the NRHP. In addition to the completion of these primary goals, several of the survey's secondary goals were also satisfied. These include the identification of specific building types or construction methods which were common or unique to the historic built environment of Nebraska, and the expansion of knowledge regarding ethnic settlement and building technologies.

The following table outlines the numerical results of the Logan County Historic Buildings Survey. The results included in parentheses indicate those properties previously surveyed by the NESHPO. The numbers are summarized according to the NEHBS number prefixes for rural and town locations.

Numerical Summary of Logan County Reconnaissance Survey

LOGAN COUNTY	TOTAL PROPERTIES	CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS	CONTRIBUTING SITES	CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES	CONTRIBUTING OBJECTS
L000: Rural	23	85	0	4	24
L001: Gandy	6	8	0	0	0
L003: Stapleton	21	31	1	0	1
<hr/>					
TOTAL NUMBER SURVEYED					
IN FY 1989-1990:	50	124	1	4	25
TOTAL NEHBS TO DATE:	50	124	1	4	25

Approximated Area of Survey Coverage: 105.5 square miles (67,520 acres).  
Numbers in parenthesis indicate previously surveyed properties



## LOGAN COUNTY HISTORIC OVERVIEW

### Physical Description

Logan County is located in the Sand Hills and Loess Hills regions of Nebraska. It is bordered by Lincoln, McPherson, Thomas, Blaine, and Custer counties. A branch of the Loup River flows through the southern portion of the county. Although Logan County has few of the numerous lakes characteristic of counties to the north, its overall topography distinguishes it as part of the Nebraska Sand Hills.

The Sand Hills region of the state is composed of hilly land of low to high sand dunes stabilized by grass cover. These dunes mantle stream-deposited, sand, gravel and sandstone. The sandhills prairie and topography are unique to Nebraska and North America. The region is drained by the Loup River system except along the northern edge which is drained by the Niobrara River (Historic Contexts in Nebraska, NESHPO, 1989). The Loess Hills geographic zone is characterized by dissected plains topography. The area is drained by the extensive Loup River system, which flows out of the sandhills from the northwest. Native vegetation is predominantly mixed prairie grasses, composed of bluestem, buffalo, and grama grasses (Historic Contexts in Nebraska, NESHPO, 1989). Like its surrounding counties, Logan has never had a large population and remains today one of the least populated counties in the state.

### Original Inhabitants

Prior to nineteenth-century white settlement, the Pawnee and Sioux Native American tribes claimed the land of the Sand Hills as hunting grounds. The two tribes disputed various tracts between themselves. The Pawnee claimed the drainage area of the Loup River as their hunting grounds and camped near the mouth of the river. The Sioux claimed lands

east to the fork of the Platte River and north to the mouth of the White River in South Dakota as their hunting grounds. Both tribes depended on the bison, which roamed the sandhills in vast numbers as their primary source of food and raw material.

Other Native American tribes in Nebraska included the Omaha, Otoe, and Ponca, all of whom were more sedentary than the Sioux or Pawnee. Between 1854 and 1876 all territories in Nebraska claimed by Native American tribes had been acquired by the United States government either through treaty and/or coercion. The final treaty, in 1876, opened the Sand Hills region to settlement.

#### **Settlement of Nebraska**

The first Europeans to reach what would become Nebraska were Spanish soldiers in search of mythical Quivira (Olson, 1966, p. 29). By the early 1700's the French had begun to move into the trans-Missouri country. In 1763 the Spanish, through the Treaty of Paris, assumed possession of all land west of the Mississippi River. In 1800, the French took possession of the region under the Treaty of San Ildefonso. However, in 1803 the French, under Napoleon, sold this vast expanse of land to the Americans for about 4 cents an acre, or fifteen million dollars. The Louisiana Purchase, as the exchange was called, included the territory that would become Nebraska.

In 1803, the federal government began plans to initiate exploration of their new possession with the famed Lewis and Clark Expedition. Undertaken "for purposes of extending the external commerce of the United States," Congress appropriated \$2,500.00 for the expedition (Olson, p. 36). In the spring of 1804, members of the exploration team left the St. Louis area and by July 1804, had made their first camp near the mouth of the Little Nemaha River in what would eventually become Nebraska.

The vast area of land obtained through the Louisiana Purchase was designated by

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Congress in 1834 as land reserved for Native Americans. During the first half of the nineteenth-century, this region was traversed by fur trappers, missionaries, and westward bound settlers. Examples of Pre-Territorial (1804-1854)<sup>1</sup> establishments in Nebraska include Fort Atkinson (1820's) on the Missouri River, and the Moses Merrill Baptist Mission (1833) near Bellvue.

Another important aspect of settlement in Nebraska during the Pre-Territorial Period (1804-1854), was the presence of the Oregon, Mormon, and California Trails; all of which passed through the southern half of the state. These trails passed westward through the Platte River valley and were primarily used between 1841 and 1848. These trails brought many people and opportunities for trade to the region.

Nebraska Territory was officially established in 1854, and the first legislature convened in January, 1855. During the Territorial Period (1854-1867), the majority of settlement took place in the southeast and eastern sections of the state. In this period, settlement occurred through either the provisions of the Pre-Emption Law of 1841, purchase of military bounty land warrants, or by direct purchase. The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed for more liberal disbursement of public domain, and allowed settlers to acquire between 40 and 160 acres of land without the standard per acre fee if they remained on the claim for five years and met a specified level of improvements (i.e. buildings, land under cultivation). A significant amount of settlement in of Nebraska occurred primarily under the impetus of the Homestead Act, or later under the provisions of the 1904 Kinkaid Act (for a detailed discussion of the Kinkaid Act, see p. 59).

<sup>1</sup> All Temporal Periods referred to in this text were established by "Historic Contexts in Nebraska, Topical Listing", NESHPO, 1989, and consist of:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) Pre-Territorial, 1804-1854          | 5) Spurious Economic Growth, 1920-1929 |
| 2) Territorial, 1854-1867              | 6) The Great Depression, 1929-1941     |
| 3) Settlement and Expansion, 1867-1890 | 7) World War II, 1941-1945             |
| 4) Development and Growth, 1890-1920   | 8) Post-War Nebraska, 1945-Present     |

Nebraska became a state in 1867 with its present borders defined. In the early 1860's, the federal government began planning a trans-continental railway line for the transportation of people and goods which would unite the country. The railroad would extend through Nebraska beginning at a point near Omaha. In 1867, the route was completed when the Union Pacific and Central Pacific lines joined in Utah. Development of the line through Nebraska had a major impact on the settlement and growth of small towns and communities throughout the western region of the state, and the state as a whole. Inland counties, without a railroad through their borders, generally developed at a slower rate and often did not achieve the kinds of settlement and sustained populations in counties through which a line ran. In counties where the railroad extended, towns, or proposed towns, prospered or failed depending on the location of a depot or siding.

While eastern, northeastern, and central regions of the state had been settled during the Settlement and Expansion Period (1867-1890), the Sand Hills region of Nebraska was only just beginning to be settled. This region, encompassing a great portion of western Nebraska north of the Platte River, was generally not suitable for the agricultural activities pursued in the rest of the state. Since the 1870's, cattlemen had free-ranged vast herds in the area. In the late 1860's and early 1870's, Texas cattlemen began to drive their herds north on the Texas Trail to feed in Nebraska. The free-range cattle companies established large ranches in the Sand Hills region and operated until conflicts with the federal government divided the land into smaller homesteads parcels, (for a discussion of the early cattle industry, see Sand Hills Range Livestock Production p. 28).

Although settlement had begun in the Sand Hills region during the Settlement and Expansion era (1867-1890), it was not until the Development and Growth Period in Nebraska (1890-1920) that significant permanent settlement was established. The most significant impetus for extensive settlement of the Sand Hills during this period was the passage of

the Kinkaid Act on June 28, 1904. Designed to encourage settlement in the Sand Hills region, the Kinkaid Act allowed homesteaders to file 640 acre claims, as opposed to the previous 160 acres. This act recognized that the arid Sand Hills region required a larger parcel of land for the application of farming and ranching practices. The Kinkaid Act was responsible for the largest census figures to date (1920) for many of the Sand Hills counties. Although many Kinkaid homesteads eventually sold out to larger ranching endeavors, the act successfully disposed of the public lands in the area.

The social and economic success of the Development and Growth Period (1890-1920) came to an end with the era of the Great Depression (1929-1941). By December 1932, agricultural prices were the lowest in state history; and the farmers' purchasing power continued to decline. Many people left the western section of the state and some towns ceased to exist. Populations declined and much commercial development came to a halt. The end of the Depression, followed by the onset of World War II (1941-1945), combined to stabilize not only the Sand Hills but the state as a whole. Economically, Nebraska benefited from the War through the arrival of new industries. Training facilities, ordnance plants and a bomber production plant were located in the state. As the War drew to a close, a new and lasting prosperity had begun in the state.

Further stability has been witnessed during the Post-War Period in Nebraska, (1946-present). The agricultural prosperity that began during World War II continued on into the 1950's and 1960's. Economic development and increased agricultural technology have vaulted the region into an era of advanced irrigation and range management techniques. So while the number of farms and rural population decreased, agricultural output increased to new highs.

## County History

The Territorial Period (1854-1867. See Temporal Periods, NESHPO: 1990) in Nebraska brought little settlement to the region which would become Logan County. The territory that became Logan County was opened for settlement during the Settlement and Development period (1867-1890) by the federal government in 1884. The following year a group of soldiers arrived in the area to establish a community; they located near the site of Logan, in a small valley. In 1885 a vote was taken to determine the site of the county seat. The members of the Logan settlement had confidently built a two-story frame courthouse with cupola. Their efforts, however, were premature since Gandy, a new townsite, won the county seat designation in the election. Gandy was officially platted in November, 1885. The courthouse which had been constructed in Logan was eventually used as a barn.

The county experienced many changes during the Development and Growth period (1890-1920). Perhaps the most notable being the establishment of the Kinkaid Act in 1904 and completion of the railroad in 1912. Passage of the Kinkaid Act brought many new settlers who took up unclaimed land in the region. A surge in population resulted in establishment of many county post offices. However, a steady decline in population caused the demise for many of these. The railroad arrived in the county in 1912 but never reached Gandy; the line ran two miles north of the town. In response, many early businesses left Gandy to relocate at the railroad's terminus, where the new town of Stapleton was established. A battle for the county seat soon followed. In an attempt to retain the county seat, Gandy incorporated in 1911, thereby forcing Union Pacific to build a depot near the community. Gandy's efforts, however, were in vain and after the 1929 election, the county seat was moved to Stapleton.

In the Post-War period (1945 to Present), many modern conveniences arrived in Logan

County. Telephone service became available to residents during the early 1950's. Along with telephone communication came comprehensive electrical service, although both Gandy and Stapleton had previously been serviced by North Platte utilities. Two state highways run through the county aiding the railroad in shipment of goods and people. Highway #92 runs east/west from Arnold to Stapleton and on to Tryon. Running north/south is Highway #83 connecting Stapleton south to North Platte and north to Thedford.

### **Logan County Towns**

The county seat, Stapleton, had its beginnings in 1911 when the Union Pacific Railroad bypassed Gandy and created Stapleton at the rail line's terminus. The town was platted by the Lincoln Land Company in 1913 and a depot was built soon after. One of the first buildings in Stapleton was a small jail house; it was later used as a storage building on a nearby farm. Other early buildings in Stapleton were those belonging to businesses that abandoned the bypassed town of Gandy.

Between 1912 and 1929, Stapleton experienced an influential period of growth. This period of development was due to the relocation of the county seat in 1929 to Stapleton. Businesses, churches, schools, and organizations established in Stapleton adding economic and social stability to the community. Stapleton's first bank, relocated from Gandy, established in 1912. The Farmer's State Bank of Gandy also relocated to Stapleton in 1913. A third bank was established in 1913, reflecting the needs of Stapleton during this period of prosperity. Gandy's Presbyterian church also relocated to Stapleton in 1912. The American Legion and its auxiliary established a Stapleton post in 1912.

As previously mentioned, the Logan county seat relocated from Gandy to Stapleton in 1929. Courthouse duties were carried out from the old Nicholas Hotel which had also been moved from Gandy. This building was remodelled in the 1930's with help from the Works

Progress Administration (W.P.A.). The courthouse burned in 1962 and has been replaced by a one-story brick courthouse which continues to serve Logan County.

Later organizations in Stapleton include: Eastern Star; which relocated from Gandy to Stapleton in 1943, Veterans of Foreign War; established in 1946, and the Assembly of God church; built in 1955 after establishment in 1953. In 1950, the circa 1915 grandstand was torn down with a newer one being constructed in its place. Later a dance floor was added to the structure providing additional social activity for the community.

Gandy is located three and one half miles east of Stapleton and is the only other incorporated town in Logan County. Jim Gandy, a businessman from Broken Bow, donated the land which became the town bearing his name. During its years as county seat, Gandy boasted two parks, a courthouse square, and many supporting businesses. Growth was accelerated by enactment of the Kinkaid Act in 1904 and anticipation of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1911. Ironically, the railroad would eventually hinder Gandy more than it would help. Disagreement regarding the right-of-way adjacent to Gandy resulted in an arbitrary move by Union Pacific to relocate the rail line two miles north of town. In 1929, the county seat relocated to the new townsite of Stapleton. As a result, between 1930 and 1940, Gandy's population dropped from 300 to 100.

Early businesses in Gandy included two banks, a meat market, grain elevator, lumber yard, and stockyard. Today, only two associated buildings were identified for reconnaissance level documentation, LO01-001 and LO01-004. LO01-001 consists of a one-story frame with false-front building which is abandoned and deteriorated. The second documented commercial building is the former I.O.O.F./Gandy Cash Store (LO01-004). The two-story brick building was built during Gandy's prominent years and reflects the town's early prosperity.

Religious organizations that relocated from Gandy to Stapleton included a



Presbyterian and Catholic congregations. Gandy Methodist church services discontinued in 1965. Through the years, school enrollment declined, forcing the Gandy high school to close in 1957 and the grade school in 1960. Today, the one-story cement block former county courthouse in Gandy, has been converted into a residence. Immediately east of this building is the former county jail (LO01-002); which was included in the inventory of historic buildings.

Other Logan County communities include Logan, Whittier, Cody Lake and the Dorp area. Logan, as mentioned earlier in this text, was the original town site in Logan County. Resulting from the county seat elections in 1885, the original town of Logan lost to Gandy and faded into memory. In 1922, Union Pacific established a new town of Logan three miles from the old site. At one time there were three general stores in Logan and other community businesses. Whittier, Cody Lake and Dorp can better be classified as rural neighborhoods rather than communities.

### **Agriculture and Ranching**

The presence of the South Loup River in southern Logan County creates an area of transition between the Sand Hills Range Livestock Production region (H.C.: 08.08) to the north and the Loess Hills (H.C.: 08.04) region to the south. Despite the division of the county into two type-of-farming regions, the primary effort of local ranch owners is the production of cattle.

Characterized by the grass covered dunes of the Sandhills region, northern Logan County provides excellent land for cattle grazing. This portion of Logan County is classified in the Sand Hills Range Livestock Production region of the state (NESHPO, "Historic Contexts in Nebraska: Topical Listing" 1990). Cattle production and related agricultural practices are the major economic enterprise in the county. Many ranchers

depend on their hay crops to feed herds through the winter. Events such as the Great Depression, the drought of the 1930's and the recession of the 1980's has contributed to family and corporate ranches consisting of thousands of acres. (For a more detailed discussion of Sand Hills Range Livestock Production refer to page 28).

The south-central and southeastern portions of Logan County lie in the Loess Hills geographic zone of Nebraska and are characterized by dissected plains topography. This is a region of transition between the Sandhills of north central Nebraska and the farming country of south and east Nebraska. In Logan County, the predominant aspects of the Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain region consist of cattle grazing and hay production. For a more detailed discussion of Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming and Cash Grain farming, see p. 34).

#### **Final Comments**

Logan County was opened for settlement by the federal government in 1884. Two major influences in settlement of this region occurred with the Kinkaid Act (1904) and the arrival of the railroad (1911). Stapleton became the county seat in 1929 replacing Gandy which had held it since 1885. Stapleton and Gandy remain the only incorporated towns in Logan County. Historically, as is true today, Logan County's mainstay is primarily cattle ranching. Events such as the Great Depression, the drought of the 1930's and the recession of the 1980's have contributed to the decline in population, making Logan one of the least populated counties in Nebraska.

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## **GENERAL SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

The primary objective of the Logan County Historic Buildings Survey was to provide a preliminary characterization of the historic resources extant within the county. In addition to this, several other objectives were identified in the Research Design which utilize the data collected by the survey and validate the need for its performance. First among these additional objectives was the contribution of information to the contextual setting of Nebraska's historic architecture. The performance of the Logan County Historic Buildings Survey has generated information which contributes to a statewide knowledge and builds a background with which future survey information can be evaluated.

Secondly, it was the objective of the Logan County Historic Buildings Survey to identify those properties within the county which are eligible or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Additional objectives of the survey included: the identification of specific properties or geographic areas which, in the event of an intensive survey, would contribute useful information to the context of Nebraska's historic architecture; the identification of specific property types; the identification of construction methods which may relate to or are unique to those existing in the NEHBS database, and the expansion of knowledge regarding ethnic settlement, building technologies and architectural image.

In addition to these conceptual objectives, the Logan County Historic Buildings Survey was intended to fulfill several numerical objectives as stated in the Research Design.

These quantitative objectives consisted of:

- A. The recording of an estimated 70 properties in Logan County at the completion of the survey.

- B. The coverage of approximately 86,400 acres (135 square miles) in Logan County.  
In addition, each street of the two extant Logan County communities will be surveyed using reconnaissance survey methods.
- C. Identification of at least 15 properties worthy of nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.
- D. Identification of at least one possible Historic District or Multiple Property nominations eligible for National Register listing.
- E. Evaluating by the following hierarchy those properties which are eligible (E) or potentially eligible (P) for listing in the National Register, and those properties which contribute (C) to the database of extant material resources in the county.

A post-survey evaluation of these goals reveals that the Logan County Historic Buildings Survey has, in general, satisfied its preliminary objectives. The satisfaction of these goals can be expressed in two quantifiable terms: numerical and geographic. Each street of both Logan County communities and every public rural road was surveyed using reconnaissance survey methods. The numbers produced by the survey are indicative of the comprehensive nature with which the survey was performed. A total of 154 contributing buildings, structures, objects and sites were documented on 50 individual properties. The survey canvassed approximately 67,520 acres (105.5 square miles) and identified 18 properties eligible or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Historic Buildings Survey of Logan County has produced a diverse collection of historic material resources. This diversity of these resources is expressed in the range of Historic Contexts and Associated Property Types represented in the database of the

surveyed properties. The list of Historic Contexts recorded by the reconnaissance level survey includes the following themes as defined by the NESHPO (Historic Contexts in Nebraska--Topical Listing, 1989).

Historic Context	# of Properties
02.04.01. Religion: Presbyterian Church in America, in Nebraska	1
04.02. Government: Local Government	1
04.03. Government: County Government	1
04.06. Government: Federal Government	1
06.01.04. Education: High Schools and Secondary Education	1
07.06. Diversion: Leisure and Recreation	1
08.04. Agriculture: Loess Hills Livestock, Gen. Farming and Cash Grain	12
08.08. Agriculture: Sand Hills Range Livestock Production	5
12.02.04. Commerce: Retail Commerce in the Loess Hills Region	4
16.05. Settlement: Dwelling in Dispersed and Clustered Settlement	23

## Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey

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### **A Topical Discussion and Preliminary Inventory of Logan County Historic Properties**

The following discussion consists of a topical summary and Preliminary Inventory of the historic properties documented during the Logan County Historic Buildings Survey. This discussion is arranged according to the Topical Listing of Historic Contexts developed by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NESHPO, 1990). It includes summaries only of those historic contexts associated with properties judged eligible or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Included at the end of each context summary is a photographic inventory of properties which appear eligible or potentially eligible for National Register. The properties judged eligible generally precede those considered potentially eligible. The properties labeled "potentially eligible" are included in the inventory for purposes of defining those buildings that may lack the significance or integrity for NRHP listing but which help define the character of the historic built environment of Logan County. In addition, those properties already listed on the NRHP are included in the inventory according to their respective context.

#### **Historic Context: Government**

The contextual topic of Government encompasses the art or science of established government as well as competition between interest groups for leadership of local, state, or national government. Associated historic buildings include post offices, courthouses, community halls, and fire stations. Typically, the recording of buildings fitting this context has been somewhat low due presumably to the fact that it only takes one or two of these buildings to satisfy the governing needs of small communities.

The Historic Buildings Survey of Logan County found three (3) properties relating to

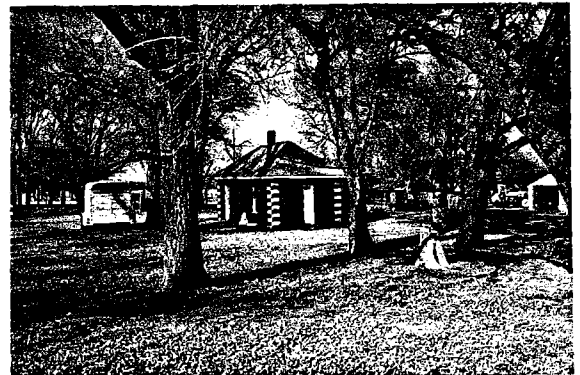
# Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey

the context of Government which met the criteria for reconnaissance level survey. The following table outlines the basic data regarding the three surveyed properties.

NEHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/COMMON NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING				PROPERTY TYPE	DOE
				BLDG.	SITE	STRU.	OBJ.		
LO03-014	C1910	CITY MAINTENANCE BUILDING	04.02	1	0	0	0	04.1.5	P
LO01-002	C1908	FORMER LOGAN COUNTY JAIL	04.03	1	0	0	0	04.3.2	P
LO03-015	C1927	POST OFFICE	04.06	1	0	0	0	04.2.3	E

Of the three government properties included in the reconnaissance survey, the Stapleton post office (LO03-015) has been determined eligible for National Register listing. The former Logan County Jail (LO01-002) and city maintenance building (LO03-014) have been determined potentially eligible. These properties are significant for their contributions to the development of Federal, County, and Local Government in Logan County.

NEHBS NUMBER: LO01-002      Gandy  
 DATE: C.1908  
 COMMON NAME: Former Logan County Jail  
 HISTORIC CONTEXT: Government (04.03)  
 PROPERTY TYPE: Jail (04.3.2)  
 DOE: Potentially Eligible  
 Small concrete block building, in original courthouse square; served as the Logan County jail until courthouse duties were relocated to the neighboring town of Stapleton in 1929.



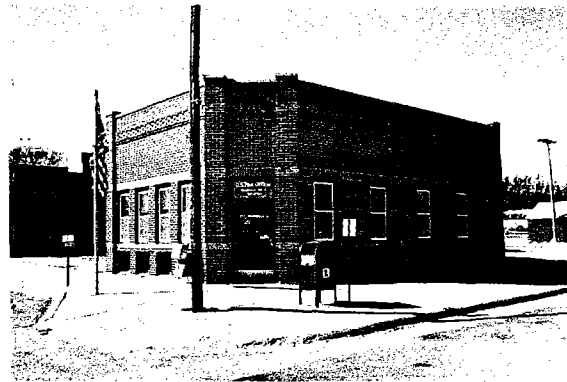


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**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO03-014      Stapleton  
**DATE:** C.1900  
**COMMON NAME:** Former City Building  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Government (04.02)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Local Office Building (04.1.5)  
**DOE:** Potentially Eligible  
 Modest brick building indicative of small town main street architecture in Logan County. Service garage entrance on south facade suggests maintenance intentions.



**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO03-015      Stapleton  
**DATE:** C.1927  
**COMMON NAME:** Stapleton Post Office  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Government (04.06)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Post Office (04.2.3)  
**DOE:** Eligible  
 Well-preserved brick building which may have served originally as a bank. Important to Federal Government Context development and to Local Post Office property type development.



### Historic Context: Education

The contextual topic of Education encompasses any act or process which imparts or aids in the acquisition of knowledge. Primary emphasis of this context is focused upon the components of schooling and enrichment. Historic buildings which fit this context include schools, libraries, and museums. Considerations include formal apprenticeship and enculturation; primary, elementary, junior, and senior high schools, colleges and universities; vocational, adult, continuing, specialty and professional education.

The Historic Buildings Survey of Logan County recorded only one (1) education related property which was also considered potentially eligible for National Register listing.

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The Logan County High School (LO01-006), contributes to the sub-context of High School Education (06.01.04). Consistent with the pattern established by previous historic buildings survey projects in Nebraska, the school buildings recorded in the western Sandhills region fit into one of two distinct form types: a simple one-room frame hall-type building, and a larger-scale masonry building.

Predominantly found in the rural environs, one-room hall-type schools appear to have been constructed primarily between 1900 and 1915. These buildings are typically one-story rectangular-shaped structures with a gable-end entry protected by a gable roof placed in longitudinal orientation to the road. In Logan County, no schools of the hall-type were identified.

The second type of school building identified in NEHBS projects is the "modern" school which generally consists of larger scale masonry buildings found primarily in town locations. These buildings were generally built between 1920 and 1930 and consist of a raised basement two-story masonry structure occupying the grounds of a single town block. Education properties recorded in Logan County which portray the "modern" school characteristics include the abandoned Logan County High School (LO01-006) located in the small community of Gandy.

**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO01-006      Gandy  
**DATE:** 1930  
**RESOURCE NAME:** Logan County High School  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Education (06.01.04)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** County High School (06.3.5)  
**DOE:** Potentially Eligible  
Abandoned two-story stucco school with community auditorium dedicated by the alumni association in 1930. Important as a major contributor to the twentieth-century development of Logan County.



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**Historic Context: Agriculture**

The historic contexts relating to the theme of agriculture will obviously be of great variety and importance to Nebraska. As a predominantly agrarian-based society, the economic well-being of the state is, in part, dependent upon the production of crops and livestock. Like other Nebraska counties, settlement of Logan County was correspondent to the agricultural success of the early permanent settlers. Consequently, documentation of historic agricultural properties in Logan County was viewed as an important task.

The resulting effort of the rural-based survey was the recording of seventeen (17) individual properties associated with the agriculture historic context. In comparison to the rural surveys of southeast Nebraska counties, this total appears relatively insignificant. However, based on the settlement and agricultural history of Sandhills counties, large numbers of rural properties were not anticipated. In fact, the seventeen agriculture properties recorded by the survey account for a typical average of 34% of the fifty total contributing buildings and objects identified in the survey. Of the 17 agriculture related properties in the Logan County database, three (3) have been judged eligible for National Register listing with an additional two (2) properties considered potentially eligible for such listing. These judgements are based on reconnaissance survey observations and must be confirmed by NESHPO staff pending further research. Pertinent information regarding the seventeen surveyed properties linked to agriculture in Logan County is outlined in the table on the following page.

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NEHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/Common NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING				PROPERTY TYPE	DOE
				BLDG.	SITE	STRU.	OBJ.		
L000-009	C1901	RANCH	08.04	6	0	0	2	08.1	C
L000-010	C1912	ALTERED SOD HOUSE	08.04	1	0	0	0	16.5.1, 11.4.3:1	C
L000-011	C1910	ABAN RANCH	08.04	3	0	0	1	08.1	C
L000-013	C1907	ABAN RANCH HOUSE	08.04	3	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L000-014	C1904	ABAN HOUSE	08.04	6	0	0	2	16.5.1	C
L000-015	C1907	RANCH	08.04	7	0	0	1	08.1	C
L000-016	C1918	RANCH HOUSE	08.04	3	0	1	1	16.5.1	C
L000-017	C1895	RANCH	08.04	4	0	0	0	08.1	E
L000-018	C1893	ABAN RANCH	08.04	6	0	0	2	08.1	P
L000-021	C1910	RANCH	08.04	4	0	0	0	08.1	C
L000-022	C1925	RANCH	08.04	5	0	0	0	08.1	P
L000-012	C1905	RANCH w/SOD HOUSE	08.04, 16	7	0	0	0	08.1, 11.4.3:1	E
L000-001	C1905	RANCH	08.08	4	0	0	3	08.1	C
L000-003	C1920	FARM	08.08	5	0	0	3	08.1	C
L000-004	C1910	RANCH	08.08	3	0	0	2	08.1	C
L000-006	C1923	BAKER RANCH W/ BALED HAY HOUSE	08.08	5	0	0	2	08.1, 11.4.3:6	E
L000-007	C1900	HOUSE ON N.C. RANCH	08.08	1	0	0	1	16.5.1	C

The ranches documented by the survey are collectively viewed as important material resources for the state of Nebraska. They portray the raw materials of a people and an industry responsible for the settlement of a vast portion of our state. The continued existence of some of the ranches and farmsteads documented in Logan County is, however, doubtful. In fact, 24% of the 17 agriculture properties recorded by the survey consisted of abandoned farms or farm houses. The majority of these farms range in their era of construction from approximately 1890 to 1930. They contain the basic buildings necessary for crop and animal production such as livestock barns, loafing sheds, granaries, cribs, and implement garages.

Particular emphasis was placed on the observance of farm properties relating to Sand Hills Range Livestock Production (Historic Context: 08.08) and Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming and Cash Grain Production (Historic Context: 08.04). These two farming types were identified by the NESHPO as the predominant types of agriculture practised in Logan County (See Historic Contexts in Nebraska--Topical Listing, 1990). It should be

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noted however, that several buildings assigned to the Historic Context of Settlement may, with future research, be cross-referenced to the Sand Hills or Loess Hills contexts.

In consideration of their importance to the material resources found in Logan County, the aforementioned agriculture historic contexts are discussed in greater detail in the following summaries.

### AGRICULTURE HISTORIC CONTEXTS IN LOGAN COUNTY

#### Introduction

Nebraska is a state of great diversity. Diversities exist among its people, its lands, its topography and, of more immediate concern to this discussion, its agriculture. The agricultural diversity of the state of Nebraska has been forged through one hundred years of adaptation and evolution in a land once labeled the "Great American Desert." During this time, the "desert" waste of Nebraska has been transformed into some of the most productive farm and ranch land in the United States.

The diversity of the agricultural industry in Nebraska is evident not only in geographic location but in historical development as well. The study of the various agricultural practises in Nebraska was first addressed in the 1930's by scientists from the University of Nebraska College of Agriculture. Their efforts focused upon defining a conceptual framework which would represent agriculture throughout the state. The result was the identification of type-of-farming, or system-of-farming areas which characterize regions by cropping and livestock systems. The publication of the type-of-farming definitions appeared in Research Bulletins issued by the College of Agriculture Experiment Station.

The term "type-of-farming" is used to describe a group of farms which are similar in

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size and enterprise combination. In this way, a group of farms having the same kind, quantity, and proportion of crops and livestock may be said to be following the same type of farming (Hedges and Elliott, p. 3). Likewise, the term type-of-farming area, refers to a region which contains a high degree of uniformity in agricultural production and in the physical and economic conditions under which production takes place.

The boundaries of the type areas do not conform to imposed government boundaries. In most cases, the transition from one region to another is gradual. The differences between the regions lie mainly in the dominant enterprises and their relative importance in the farming systems. In addition, variations within specific regions may differ as a result of terrain, soil types, and relative size of farms. In these cases, the definition of each type-of-farming area identifies the dominant farm system and the significant variations of that system within the region.

The boundaries delineated by the Agriculture College Research Bulletins (No. 244, Hedges and Elliott, May 1930; & No. 299, L.F. Garey, May 1936) were modified by the NESHPO to incorporate the regions into a framework suitable for preservation planning and historic context development. Framework developed by the NESHPO uses the characterization of agricultural activity in Nebraska as a tool in identifying, evaluating, and nominating significant historic resources to the National Register of Historic Places. Using Research Bulletins as a basis, the NESHPO developed a ten region agricultural and geographic definition of the state. The ten areas redefined by the NESHPO and incorporated into Historic Context framework are: 1. Southeastern General Farming (08.01), 2. Northeastern Intensive Livestock Production (8.02), 3. Lower Niobrara Livestock, Wild Hay and Cash Grain Production (08.03), 4. Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain Production (08.04), 5. Central Plains Cash Grain and Livestock Production (08.05),

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6. Republican Valley General Farming, Cash Grain, and Livestock Production (08.06),  
 7. High Plains Cash Grain, Livestock and Potato Production (08.07), 8. Sand Hills Range  
 Livestock Production (08.08), 9. Pine Ridge Range Livestock, Cash Grain and Potato  
 Production (08.09), 10. Scottsbluff Livestock, Cash Grain and Root Crop Production  
 (08.10).

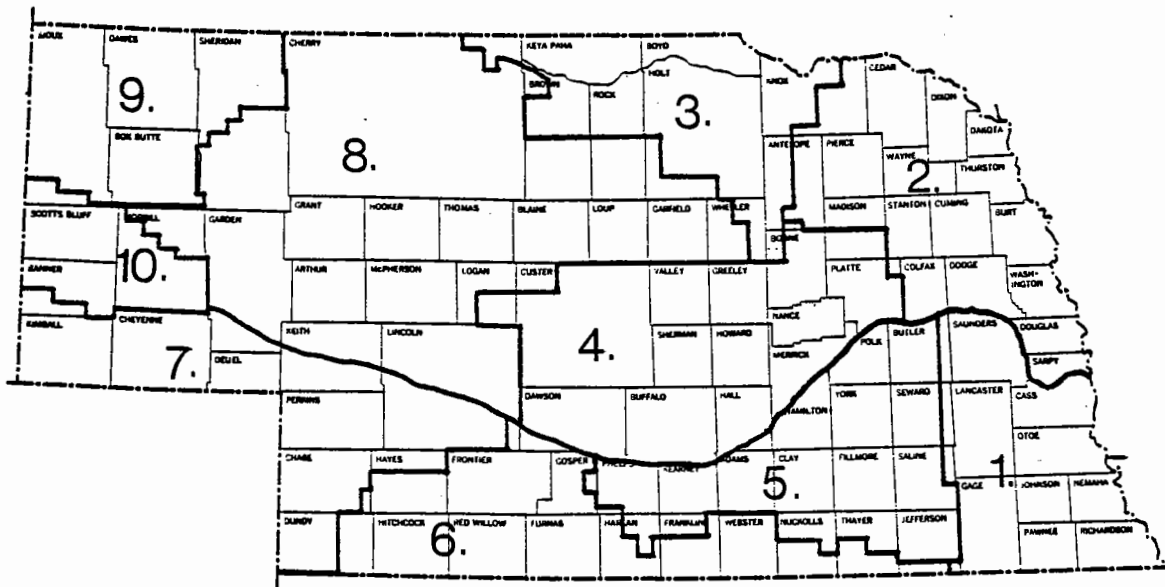


Fig. 1. Type-of-Farming and Geographic Regions for the state of Nebraska.

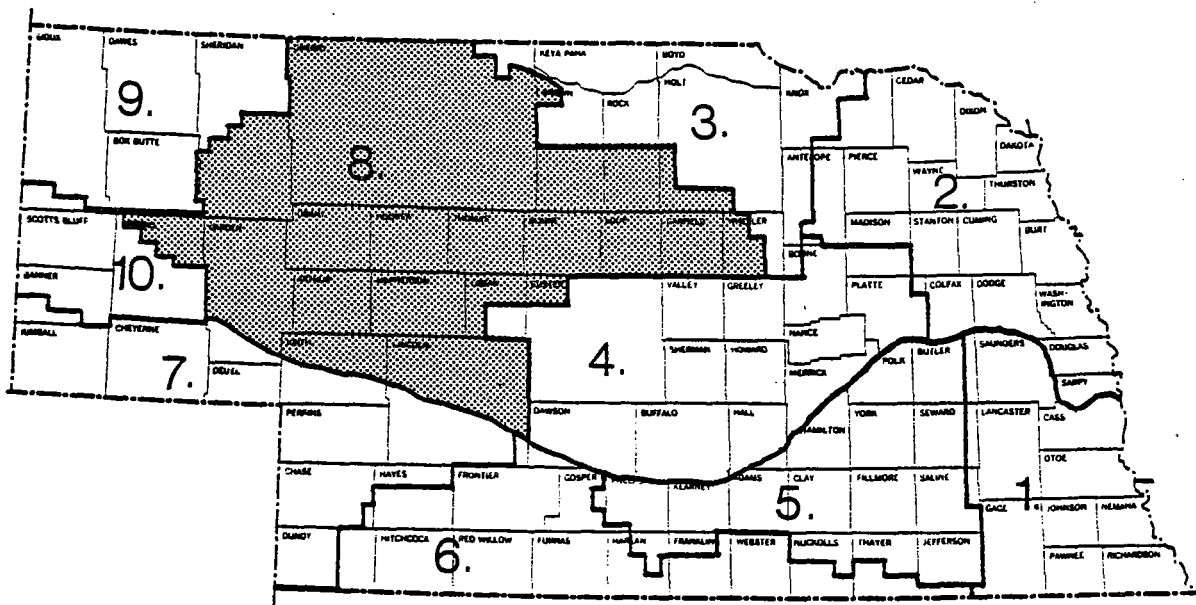
(Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office, 1989).

As evidenced by the Regions Map in Figure 1, the Logan County Historic Building Survey area contains two type-of- farming regions: the Sand Hills Range Livestock Production and the Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming and Cash Grain Crop Production. Due to their

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influence on the settlement and development of Logan County, a discussion of these types and associated historic buildings is presented below.

### Sand Hills Range Livestock Production



**Fig. 2: The Sand Hills Range Livestock Production Area.**

The Sand Hills Range Livestock Production region, in the north-central and northwest portions of the state, extends north from the Platte River Valley to the South Dakota border and varies in width from 100 to 200 miles. This region is the largest agricultural area identified by NESHPO and includes Cherry, Grant, Hooker, Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Arthur and McPherson Counties. In addition to this, large portions of Brown, Rock, Holt, Wheeler, Morrill, Garden, Keith, Lincoln, Sheridan and Logan Counties also lie within the Sand Hills Range Livestock Production region.

One of the fundamental characteristics of this area is the extremely large proportion



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of land devoted to the grazing of cattle. True to its name, the area includes the Nebraska Sand Hills region, the largest soil and topographic region in the state (Garey 1936, p. 27). A distinctive geographic region, the Sand Hills cover approximately one-fourth of the state and comprise the most extensive dune formation in the western hemisphere (Madson 1978, p. 493). Characterized by low-lying sand dunes covered by native grasses, the Sand Hills are predominantly rangeland. There is little surface drainage due to the porous nature of the sandy soil, and beneath the vast dunes of the Sand Hills are large aquifers which can reach a depth of one-thousand feet. Between the hills are numerous basins which sometimes widen into larger valleys. In many of these valleys the high water table has risen above the surface of the land and formed marshes, ponds, and lakes. The effect of the high water table is most evident by the presence of the 13,000 lakes scattered on the landscape of the north and west regions of the Sand Hills (Madson 1978, p. 499).

The soils of the Sand Hills region are exceptionally fine in texture and extremely susceptible to blowing. For this reason, it is the goal of the cattle producers to maintain the native grass covers to prevent "blow-outs" of the dune tops and provide the necessary supplements for grazing. Due to the presence of the sandy soils, the Sand Hills Range Livestock Production area is not conducive to the production of cultivated crops. In 1936, only eight-percent of the area was deemed suitable for cultivation (Garey 1936, p. 49). Only four-percent of the entire region was classified as containing good soils and much of those areas were located along the river and streambeds (Garey 1936, p. 49).

Given such environmental conditions it is easy to understand why the land is utilized principally for the grazing of cattle. With more than 75 percent of the land in pasture and the majority of the remaining lands utilized for hay production, the cattle enterprise

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is the logical choice as the farming type in this region (Hedges and Elliott, p. 27). Hay, in combination with limited amounts of other grains provides the winter feed necessary for breeding herds. Since the grasses of the Sand Hills are not primarily suitable for the production of grass-fat cattle, these herds are maintained and the young cattle from the area are typically sent to the corn belt region prior to final shipment to market (Hedges and Elliott, p. 59).

The Sand Hills Range Livestock Production area, therefore, is essentially a cattle-raising area. The economic base of this region, today and historically, is almost entirely from the sale of cattle with a small proportion coming from crop and dairy products (see Table 2).

**Table 2:      Utilization of Land in the Sand Hills Cattle  
                 Ranching Area, 1899-1928.**

Land Utilization	1899	1909	1919	1924	1928
Cultivated Area	.5%	2.0%	3.9%	4.1%	4.2%
Wild Hay	3.9%	8.3%	10.5%	10.5%	11.0%
Pastures	11.3%	42.2%	63.2%	66.4%	80.3%
Land not in farms	84.3%	47.5%	22.4%	19.0%	4.5%

In reviewing this table we see that the predominant trend among ranches in the Sand Hills was the increase of pasture land for the grazing of cattle. The only region to display a dominance in a singular agricultural type (in this case cattle) was the Sand Hills Range Livestock Production area. Therefore, comparatively speaking, no other single agricultural type is as important to its respective region as the cattle industry is to the Sand Hills ranching area.

**Property Types of the Sand Hills Range Livestock Production Area**

In the property type discussions previously generated for the NESHPO regarding ethnic related contexts, the buildings of discussion were organized according to the separation of Old World and New World traditions. Unfortunately, the study of buildings associated with Sand Hills cattle ranching do not lend themselves to this conceptual separation. While it is acknowledged that the design and arrangement of farm buildings elsewhere in Nebraska may have been influenced considerably by cultural traditions, the buildings of the Sand Hills Range Livestock Production area are generally without a significant ethnic influence. This is in part due to the minimal influx of foreign-born immigrants as well as the overall lack of population base capable of transferring ethnically-associated building characteristics. Even if the potential for variances in cultural design proves a valid concept in the Sand Hills ranching area, the nature of cattle production required a basic group of animal and human-related structures which were built with scarce materials and not a source for ethnic expression. The following property type discussion then, will focus upon the basic structures associated with Sand Hills Range Livestock Production.

The sand hills ranching system requires a variety of buildings and skills necessary for the successful management of significant numbers of cattle. Ranches which have retained their pre-mechanization buildings had a variety of structures important to the reconnaissance level survey. The buildings found on the Sand Hills cattle ranches are similar in some respects to those found on the Intensive Livestock Production farms of northeast Nebraska: cattle barns, cattle loafing sheds, implement sheds, cattle fencing systems, windmills, windbreaks and the occasional small-scale corn crib. In addition to

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these animal-related structures, domestic buildings included the ranch or farm house, wash houses, privies, cellars, milk houses, smoke houses, tool sheds, and chicken houses.



Another group of buildings however, were found to be exclusive to the Nebraska Sand Hills Range Livestock Production area. These buildings were constructed to either meet the needs of the cattle themselves or to shelter the activities of the ranch hands employed in handling the herds. The buildings associated with the labor force include bunkhouses, saddle sheds, cookhouses, and commissaries. The specific structures or objects created exclusively for the handling of cattle include dipping stations for cleaning and health maintenance of cattle, vaccination/branding stanchions for immunization and identification of stock, breaking pens for implementation of working stock, sorting pens for management and separation of bulls, calves and heifers, holding corrals usually located in outlying pasture land, and loading chutes for eventual shipping of sale-bound cattle.

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In addition to the fact that there exists a unique set of structures exclusive to Sand Hills cattle ranching, it is also important to note that visual characteristics of a Sand Hills ranch are also unique in comparison with other type-of-farming areas in Nebraska. The overpowering presence of the Sand Hills landscape immediately imparts a mentality of no-nonsense survival tempered by intriguing beauty. A description of a Sand Hills ranch is found in John Madson's trip to the Abbott Ranch in west-central Cherry County (National Geographic, Oct., 1978).

From the main highway the road back to the ranch is nine tough miles of ruts and sand traps. The farther you go, the more you wonder where you made the wrong turn. Suddenly, around the shoulder of a high ridge, there is ranch headquarters. The main house, in a grove of cottonwoods and box elders, is 67 years old, high-ceilinged and spacious. Nearby stand the bunkhouse and cookhouse, and set into the side of the ridge is a combination butcher shop, creamery, and commissary that can feed the ranch crew for two months if blizzards close the road.

Across the ranch yard, a blacksmith forge and machine shop are equipped to serve either horse or tractor. Beyond the pens,

And it is indeed true that the appearance of a Sand Hills ranch nestled among billowing hills imparts an ageless "old west" quality. A quality perhaps derived in part from its early beginnings as an outgrowth of the Texas cattle industry.

A map of Nebraska showing its 93 counties. The counties are grouped into 10 numbered regions. Region 4, located in the central part of the state, is shaded with a cross-hatch pattern. The regions are defined as follows:

- Region 1:** Gage, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, Richardson.
- Region 2:** Antelope, Pierce, Wayne, Thurston, Dakota.
- Region 3:** Holt, Rock, Kearney, Lincoln, Lancaster, Cass, Otoe.
- Region 4 (shaded):** Adams, Lincoln, Lancaster, Cass, Otoe, Nemaha, Pawnee, Richardson.
- Region 5:** Clay, Fillmore, Saline, Jackson, Hamilton, Boone, Seward, Lancaster, Cass, Otoe.
- Region 6:** Chase, Hayes, Frontier, Gosper, Phelps, Kearney, Lincoln, Lancaster, Cass, Otoe.
- Region 7:** Kearney, Lincoln, Lancaster, Cass, Otoe.
- Region 8:** Adams, Lincoln, Lancaster, Cass, Otoe.
- Region 9:** Adams, Lincoln, Lancaster, Cass, Otoe.
- Region 10:** Adams, Lincoln, Lancaster, Cass, Otoe.

The Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain Production region is located in the central part of the state and is extremely irregular in form. It is bordered on the south by the North Platte River valley and stretches north in a range of 45 to 90 miles,

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(see Fig. 3). The region encompasses a portion of Logan, Custer, Hall and Dawson Counties, and the entirety of Valley, Greeley, Sherman, Howard, and Buffalo Counties.

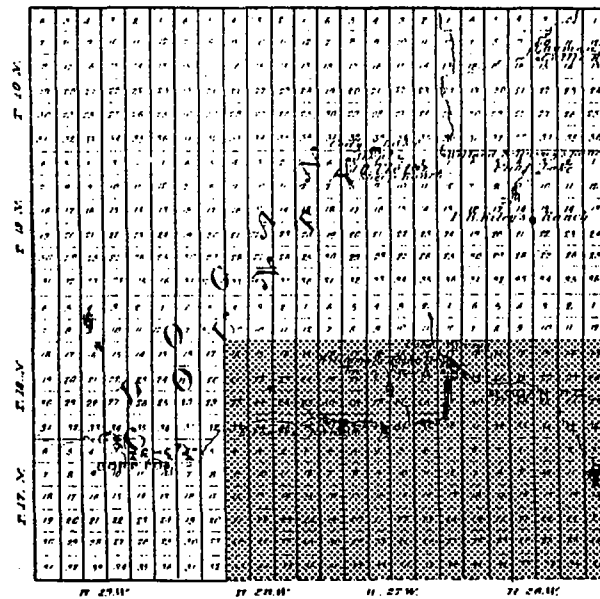
This region lies in the Loess Hills geographic zone of Nebraska and is characterized by dissected plains topography. The old, nearly level plain has been eroded by wind and water to create hilly land with moderate to steep slopes and sharp ridges. The area is drained by the extensive Loup River system, which flows out of the Sandhills from the northwest. Native vegetation is predominantly mixed prairie grasses, composed of bluestem, buffalo, and grama grasses. Stream valleys in this region are characterized by floodplain forest and prairies.

The composition of the Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain Production region in Nebraska is somewhat reflective of the diverse nature of agriculture throughout the state. This is a region of transition between the Sandhills of north central Nebraska and the farming country of south and east Nebraska.



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The topography and soils vary throughout the region and create a variety of locally predominant agricultural practices. The practices found in various intensities within the region include the grazing of beef cattle, the production of hay, and crop farming. For example, the northern portion of the region is dominated by cattle grazing and hay production while the southern areas are characterized by more intensive cash grain and general farming practices, (Hedges and Elliott, p. 57).



**Fig. 4: Location of Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain farming in Logan County.**

The location of the Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain farming in Logan County is confined primarily to the southern area of the county. This portion of the county includes the South Loup River, which originates in west-central Logan County, and the dissected plains of south-central and southeastern Logan County (see Fig. 4). This area borders the vast Sandhills region of Nebraska and is therefore composed primarily of sandy soils with low water-holding capacities which are not well-suited to crop production. The



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light nature of the soil renders it very susceptible to blowing. Consequently, land owners have found it necessary to maintain a grass-covering to prevent serious "blow-outs" of the sand-based soil. This situation has generally precluded serious large-scale attempts at crop-farming. Therefore, in Logan County, the predominant aspects of the Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain region consist of cattle grazing and hay production. Illustrating this is the fact that during the Period of Development and Growth (1890-1920), the percentage of land in wild hay and pastures increased nine and twenty-percent respectively, (see Table 1,). By 1924, sixty to seventy-five percent

**Table 1: Utilization of Land in the Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain Region, (after Hedges & Elliott).**

Land Utilization	1899	1909	1919
Cultivated Area	11.7%	15.7%	19.6%
Wild Hay	5.2%	10.4%	13.8%
Pastures	33.3%	54.0%	53.3%
Land not in farms	49.8%	19.9%	13.3%

Source: Data for 1899, 1909, 1919, obtained from census reports.

of the land in Logan County was used as pasture for beef cattle, (Hedges and Elliott, p. 14).

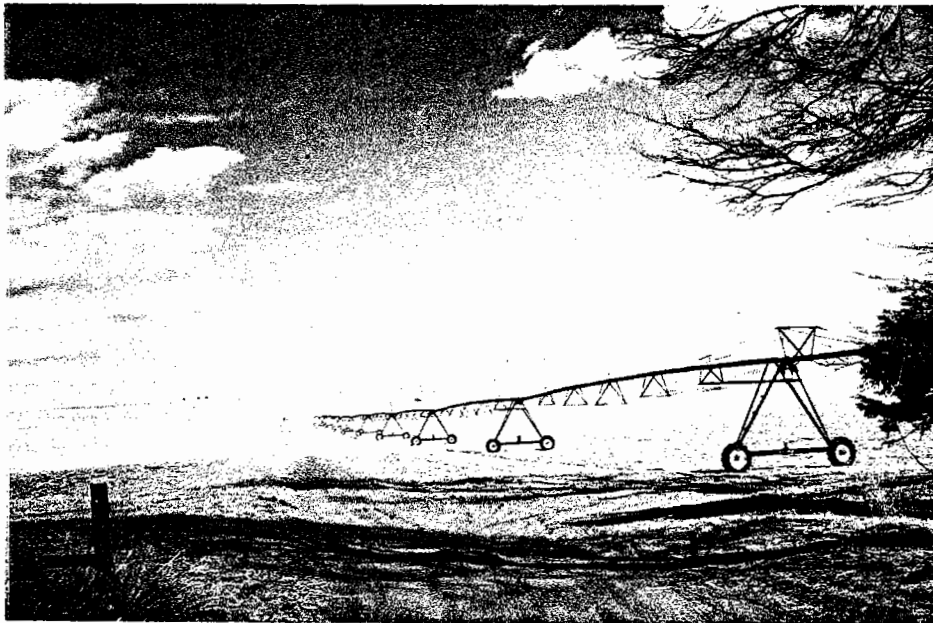
As the county became more settled, the amount of land not in farms decreased from eighty-four percent in 1899, to 13 percent in 1919. This is reflective of the impact of increased settlement motivated primarily by the Kinkaid Act of 1904, (see discussion on p. 59). The Kinkaid Act permitted the homesteading of 640 acre tracts in the Sandhills and northern Loess Hills regions. As the Kinkaiders homesteaded Logan County between 1906 and

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1919, a larger percentage of the land went into grazing and cultivation. By the mid-1920's, attempts to sustain annual crops had finally proven too difficult for the majority of Kinkaiders. Their properties were often sold to ranches or land companies and sometimes abandoned completely. The failure of cultivation farm practices in this area was first reflected in the decrease of land in farms between 1919 and 1928. The decline in percentage of land in or used by farms was propelled further by the economic hardships of the Depression era (1929-1940). This shift to fewer but larger ranches had, in some respects, returned the county to the pre-Kinkaid days of relatively larger scale beef cattle operations.

The predominance of the large beef cattle ranches in Logan County has been carried into the 1990's. The majority of land north of the South Loup River is still used for grazing, while the land in south-central and southeastern Logan County also includes hay and limited crop production. More recently, this region has witnessed the introduction of center pivot irrigation for the production of feed corn.



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### Property Types of the Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming and Cash Grain Region

The component property types of Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain Production fall into two general categories--commercially-related types and domestic types. Commercial-related buildings are considered those structures which contribute to the commercial economy of the farm enterprise. In contrast, domestic buildings are comprised of those structures related to non-income producing activities and exist primarily for the subsistence of human occupants.



The buildings associated with the Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain Production area reflect the variable character of the region. The farmsteads of this region contained commercial and domestic building types necessary for crop cultivation and storage, cattle production, and human shelter. The major commercial property types associated with this farming system were barns (horse, hay and cattle), granaries, corn

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cribs, combination crib-granaries, implement sheds, root crop cellars and windbreaks. Commercial property types of secondary importance included fencing systems, loafing sheds, pump houses, tool sheds, and stock tank systems. The major domestic property types associated with this context include the ranch or farm house, wash house, cellar, summer kitchen, smokehouse, outhouse, chicken house, brooder house, vegetable garden, garage, cob house, cistern, orchard, and miscellaneous sheds.

The farmsteads of the Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain Production region did not generally contain all of the domestic and commercial property types listed above. Instead, a significant number of these types were found in various combinations based on the particular emphasis of the respective farmstead. Among the possible combinations of property types evident in the region, the highest priority in terms of reconnaissance level documentation went to those properties exhibiting complete farmstead units. A complete farmstead unit was defined as a property comprised of a significant collection of both commercial and domestic component property types.

While the complete farmstead unit was considered the most significant resource associated with this context, other properties were surveyed. These other properties include farmsteads with only a portion of their commercial or domestic buildings extant as well as individually significant buildings on otherwise non-contributing properties. Examples which fall into this category include buildings which possess architectural distinction based on technical or artistic merits and those buildings associated with ethnic cultures. In addition, individual buildings noteworthy for their regional association with the predominant system-of-farming were also considered significant.

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## Agriculture Preliminary Inventory

**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO00-006      Rural  
**DATE:** C.1923  
**RESOURCE NAME:** Baker Ranch w/Baled Hay house  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Agriculture (08.08, 16.05)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Ranch (08.1)  
                                  Hay Construction (11.4.3:6)  
**DOE:** Eligible  
 Well maintained house built of machine-made bales of hay or straw. Significant to the study of indigenous building materials and vernacular architecture on the plains.



**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO00-012      Rural  
**DATE:** C.1905  
**COMMON NAME:** Ranch w/Sod House  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Agriculture (08.04, 16.05)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Ranch (08.1)  
                                  Sod Construction (11.4.3:1)  
**DOE:** Eligible  
 Sod house important to the multiple property study of sod construction in Nebraska under the property type 11.4.3:1. One of 51 sod buildings documented in the High Plains and Western Sandhills Survey Region.



**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO00-017      Rural  
**DATE:** C.1895  
**COMMON NAME:** Ranch  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Agriculture (08.04)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Ranch (08.1)  
**DOE:** Eligible  
 Four contributing buildings including the main house retain a high degree of historic integrity and represent turn of the century farming practice in Logan County.



## Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey

NEHBS NUMBER: LO00-018 Rural

DATE: C.1893

COMMON NAME: Abandoned House

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Agriculture (08.04)

PROPERTY TYPE: Ranch (08.1)

DOE: Potentially Eligible

Despite abandonment and deterioration, this early twentieth-century farm, which includes six contributing buildings, remains important to the historic settlement of Logan County.



NEHBS NUMBER: LO00-022 Rural

DATE: C.1925

COMMON NAME: Ranch

HISTORIC CONTEXT: Agriculture (08.04)

PROPERTY TYPE: Ranch (08.1)

DOE: Potentially Eligible

Large-scale farm established during the Spurious Economic Growth Period (1920-1929) as defined by NESHPO (See Topical Listing: NESHPO 1990).



### Historic Context: Commerce

The context of Commerce is defined as the buying and selling of commodities, involving transportation from place to place. Considerations include wholesaling and retailing; gift exchange; trade and barter; monetary economy including finance, business organization, and mercantile business. Commerce encompasses a diverse range of businesses including general stores, hotels, speciality stores and department stores.

The Historic Buildings Survey of Logan County identified four (4) Commerce related properties which met the criteria for reconnaissance level survey. Among the four

### Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey

properties, three (3) were judged potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The four properties surveyed relate to the sub-contexts of Retail Commerce in the Loess Hills Region (H.C.: 12.02.04). Pertinent information regarding the surveyed properties linked to Commerce in Logan County is outlined in the following table.

NEHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/COMMON NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING				PROPERTY TYPE	DOE
				BLDG.	SITE	STRU.	OBJ.		
LO01-001	C1880	ABAN. COMMERCIAL BUILDING	12.02.04	1	0	0	0	12.1	P
LO01-004	C1890	I.O.O.F. & GANDY CASH STORE	12.02.04	1	0	0	0	12.1.3	P
LO03-011	C1887	ABAN. COMMERCIAL BUILDING	12.02.04	1	0	0	0	12.1.1	C
LO03-012	C1881	ABAN. LUMBER COMPANY	12.02.04	2	0	0	0	11.4.2:1	P

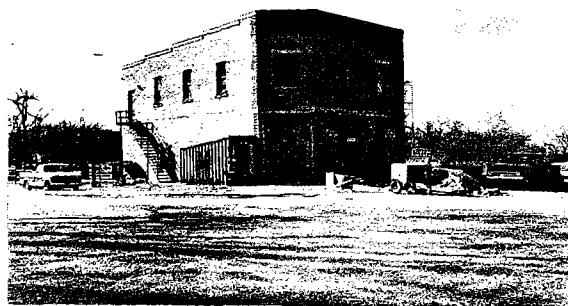
Main street commercial buildings in Logan County can be categorized into two predominant types: the frame false-front and the masonry commercial building or block. False-front types were generally found in smaller communities and consisted of one-story rectangular-shaped structures with gable roofs hidden behind an exaggerated facade. LO01-001 in Gandy is a good example of the false-front type. The false front helped to disguise the relatively low scale of the building by hiding the true size of the structure and conveying a greater sense of prominence. The primary era of construction in Logan County for this type was from 1900 to 1915. The second type documented by the survey, the masonry commercial building or block, were generally found in the larger communities of the survey area. These buildings were typically constructed between 1915 and 1930, and consisted of one and two-story masonry structures with one or two-part compositional facades. These buildings were often built on single twenty-five foot commercial lots or in double to triple wide commercial lots of fifty to seventy-five foot widths. The I.O.O.F. & Gandy Cash Store (LO01-004) located in Gandy is a good representative of this commercial building type.

## Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey

**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO01-001      Gandy  
**DATE:** C.1880  
**COMMON NAME:** Abandoned Commercial Building  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Commerce (2.02.04)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Store (12.1.1)  
**DOE:** Potentially Eligible  
 Considered potentially eligible for National Register listing based on its role in early twentieth-century commercial development of Gandy.



**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO01-004      Gandy  
**DATE:** C.1890  
**RESOURCE NAME:** Gandy Cash Store & I.O.O.F. Association (05.02.07)  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Commerce (12.02.04)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Mixed Use Building (12.1.3)  
**DOE:** Potentially Eligible  
 Two-story commercial building and lodge important to the historic development in Gandy during initial settlement. Contributes to the study of mixed use buildings (12.1.3) under the context of commerce.



**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO03-012      Stapleton  
**DATE:** C.1881  
**COMMON NAME:** Abandoned Lumber Company  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Commerce (12.02.04)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Lumber Yard (11.4.2:1)  
**DOE:** Potentially Eligible  
 Despite deterioration, LO03-012 remains an important architectural resource in the study of Stapleton's initial development during the late 1800's and early 1900's.





## Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey

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### Historic Context: Settlement

Settlement is the broad contextual title encompassing the division, acquisition, occupation, and ownership of land. This context contains settlement patterns generated through political, religious or commercial activities to facilitate the establishment of cultural systems. Specific considerations include acquisition methods and use patterns of land as well as the spatial delineation and organization of land including hamlets, villages, towns, cities and the furthest delineation--the individual dwelling.

This contextual topic contained the greatest number of documented historic properties within Logan County. Of the 50 total properties documented in Logan County, 23 or 46% fall within the context of Settlement. The majority of the 50 properties were recorded simply for their compliance with minimum reconnaissance criteria. However, three (3) properties were judged eligible and three (3) potentially eligible for National Register listing based on their respective significant qualities.

The retention of historic integrity that the 23 settlement properties displayed was quite varied. In some instances, the integrity had been severely compromised through later additions or alterations, while in other cases buildings were recorded which were extremely similar to their original condition.

The individual house-whether in an urban or a rural setting-is the most common feature of the built environment; it fulfills the basic human need for shelter. Houses represent the largest proportion of all buildings documented during reconnaissance level surveys. The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NEHBS) for Logan County was no exception: 40 houses were documented, or 32.3 percent of all the county's contributing buildings. Although houses are such a common part of our surroundings, describing them can be complex; variations result from style, age, building material, and even the ethnic heritage of

Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey

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owners or builders.

Architectural histories and guide books often provide descriptions of houses during various periods of popularity in terms of style such as Italianate, Queen Anne, or Romanesque. Good examples of these houses are usually referred to as "high style". Houses that cannot be identified as a particular style and that are built from local materials such as log, stone, and sod are generally referred to as "folk" houses. Usually dating from the settlement era of a particular locality, folk houses were often built by immigrants who patterned them after buildings in their homeland. Age, distinctive building material, or unusual form makes these houses easy to identify during building surveys. Further research and comparison however, is necessary to determine how they might reflect "old world" buildings adapted to the Nebraska landscape.

During county-wide historic buildings surveys it becomes apparent that most houses are not associated with a specific architectural style, and that in many places, few survive from the settlement period. The goal of the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, however, is to document all types of houses--from large Queen Annes with corner towers and stained glass windows, to small two room, frame houses with simple porches.

The remaining houses that are not high style or folk, are generally referred to as "vernacular" or common. All houses, whether they are high style, folk, or vernacular, can be studied for their form, floor plans, and distribution. In the case of folk and vernacular, documenting the form becomes especially important since there may not be other ways to describe these houses. Information about the basic form and features such as roof shape, and number of stories can reveal patterns or house types within a region, the work of a local builder or an ethnic group.

To document all houses, the Nebraska Historic Preservation Office uses a system

Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey

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derived in part from several vernacular house studies that was further developed for use during historic buildings surveys. Under this method, house types are categorized as "supratypes" to eliminate subjective descriptions based on "style." Instead, descriptions are based on the external mass of the house. The components of this method are defined as the following: Supratypes are categorizations based on the external massing of house, similar to that first developed by Kniffen (1936) under the ruberick of "type." The term "supertype" is used to distinguish it from other methods of type analysis which are based on external form and internal space, such as that developed by Glassie (1975).

Supratypes are defined by combinations of five massing elements derived from the core structure of the house--the predominant mass which cannot be further subdivided--exclusive of wings and porches. The five mass elements are shape, relative size, height, roof type, and orientation on the site (D. Murphy, 1989).

While this method has proved successful in surveys of Nebraska counties with large numbers of houses, the analysis of supertype descriptions in Logan County was less significant due to the lack of a sufficient number of records (40) for analysis. Consequently, a discussion regarding the predominant house types in Logan County was omitted from the analysis of settlement related properties.

**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO00-005      Rural  
**DATE:** C.1900  
**COMMON NAME:** Abandoned Ranch w/Sod House  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Settlement (16.05)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Ranch (08.1)  
Sod Construction (11.4.3:1)

**DOE:** Eligible

Significant for its association with homestead settlement and as an excellent example of the sod "brick" construction method used by rural sandhills settlers in the early twentieth-century.



## Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey

**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO00-019      Rural  
**DATE:** C.1913  
**COMMON NAME:** Sod House  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Settlement (16.05)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)  
                          Sod Construction (1.4.3:1)

**DOE:** Eligible

One of 51 sod houses recorded in the 1989-90 survey region. LO00-019 is a major contributor to the multiple property study of sod construction and reflects Kinkaid era home-steading in the western sandhills.



**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO00-020      Rural  
**DATE:** C.1901  
**COMMON NAME:** Ranch  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Settlement (16.05)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Ranch (08.1)  
**DOE:** Potentially Eligible

Included in the preliminary inventory as an example of early twentieth-century settlement in Logan County and for possible associations with significant persons.



**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO00-023      Rural  
**DATE:** C.1914  
**COMMON NAME:** Baled Hay House  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Settlement (16.05)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)  
                          Hay Construction (11.4.3:6)

**DOE:** Eligible

Thick and uneven exterior walls suggest possible baled hay/straw construction. Important to the study of indigenous building in the High Plains/Western Sandhills region.



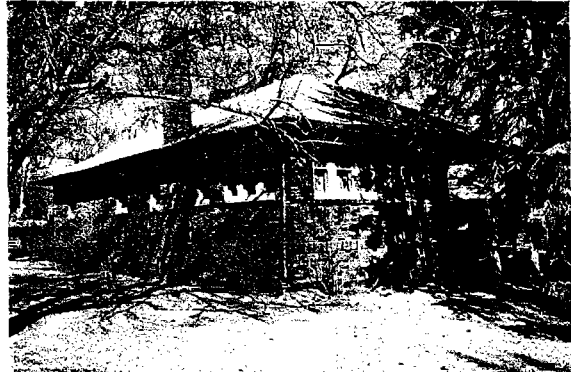
Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey

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**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO03-005      Stapleton  
**DATE:** C.1921  
**COMMON NAME:** House  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Settlement (16.05)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)  
**DOE:** Potentially Eligible  
Brick bungalow potentially eligible to the National Register as a well-preserved house built during the Spurious Economic Growth Period (1920-1019, See Topical Listing: NESHPO, 1990).



**NEHBS NUMBER:** LO03-006      Stapleton  
**DATE:** C.1920  
**COMMON NAME:** House  
**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** Settlement (16.05)  
**PROPERTY TYPE:** Single Family Dwelling (16.5.1)  
**DOE:** Potentially Eligible  
Included in the Preliminary Inventory for its retention of historic integrity and as an example of a bungalow house type.



### Important Themes of the Settlement Historic Context

A post-survey evaluation of the settlement properties recorded by the Logan County survey has identified certain resource groups which may be of potential interest to the NESHPO. The historic context of Settlement contains two multiple property topics worthy of further discussion: Native Material Buildings of the Western Sandhills and High Plains region and the Impact of the Homestead and Kinkaid Acts in the Western Sandhills and High Plains Region. A summary of these topics is presented in the following separate discussions. For examples of the properties associated with these topics, please refer to the Settlement Inventory found on pages 47 through 49 and the Agriculture Inventory on pages 41 and 42.

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**Native Material Buildings of the Western Sandhills and High Plains Study Region**

**Fig. 4: Abandoned sod house in rural Logan County (LO00-005).**

The fundamental parameter of the Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey was the recordation of buildings, structures, sites, and objects fifty years old or older which retained their historic integrity. By doing this, the NESHPO generates data regarding historic resources which is used to identify, evaluate, and register properties to the National Register of Historic Places. Based on its reconnaissance nature, the properties recorded by the survey display various levels of significance. While the majority of the buildings recorded met the integrity criteria required for reconnaissance survey, they generally did not carry a substantial amount of historic significance. However, in contrast to this were those buildings which not only retained historic integrity, but possess qualities which enhance their significance as historic material resources.

One such group of resources found during the Western Sandhills and High Plains survey that exhibit a greater level of significance are those buildings constructed from native materials during the periods of Settlement and Expansion (1867-1890), and Development and Growth (1890-1920). The most significant types of native material buildings among those found in Logan County which date to these periods were those constructed of either sod or baled straw. Seperate discussions of these two construction methods is included in the following summaries.

#### **Sod Construction in the Western Sandhills and High Plains**

Fifty properties with sod buildings were recorded during the survey of Morrill, Garden, Keith, Perkins, Arthur, McPherson and Logan Counties. These counties represent seven of the eight county Western Sandhills and High Plains survey project. The majority of these fifty properties were located in Morrill County (28), with seven found in Garden County, six in McPherson County, four in Logan County, three in Perkins County and one in each Arthur and Keith Counties (see Sod House Inventory, p. 55). In addition to the importance of their structural systems, these buildings were also considered significant for their potential association with Homestead or Kinkaid Act settlement.

The sod houses recorded in the region consist of massive sod "brick" walls measuring up to twenty-four inches in thickness. There were two kinds of ground within the region suitable for use. The short alkali grass sod was most suitable but was only found in lower levels. Black root sod was also sufficient and was found in greater abundance in the higher elevations. Bunch grass sod was not suitable for construction due to the lack of a strong root system.



**Fig. 5: Loading sod for building a sod house near the Dismal River in Thomas County.**  
(Photo: Nebraska State Historical Society).

The sod used for the houses was cut with a sod plow which would flip over one strip of sod approximately eighteen to twenty-four inches wide. These strips were then cut to desired length and stacked in alternating fashion with the grass-side down. The sod "bricks" had to be of similar thickness to keep the walls plumb. The walls were carefully laid to accommodate openings and were trimmed with a sharp spade for smoothness.

In addition to finding adequate sources of sod, settlers were also challenged by the creation of a quality plaster. The most effective method employed in the region involved locating a low swampy spot and digging two to three feet down to obtain a sticky bluish-colored gumbo. This was then mixed with water and sand to make a serviceable plaster. The walls of the sod houses were generally covered on the exterior with the gumbo-based plaster. However, examples of sod houses with no evidence of exterior plaster were also recorded.

The sod houses found in the region have a distinctly low and bulky appearance and are often identifiable by their lack of plumb walls and corners. The exterior wall height of the soddies was considerably shorter than that of frame structures and little, if any,





**Fig. 6: Sod house with addition in rural Logan County (LO00-010).**

fenestration was included in the north walls of the buildings. The house typically contained rectangular two-room plans with a narrow side dimension of thirty feet or less. However, in some cases, a large one-story square-shaped plan in a basic four-square configuration was also recorded. The general era of construction for the Homestead-Kinkaid era sod houses ranged from approximately 1890 to as late as 1916. However, exceptions to this are found in the sub-group of houses built as novelties or as a result of Depression-era poverty.

The physical condition of the sod houses recorded by the survey was quite varied. In some instances, the only physical remains of a dwelling are sod wall ruins while in others, the sod structures are well maintained.



**Fig. 7: Sod wall ruins and well-preserved sod structure, Logan County.  
(L: LO00-005, R: LO00-012).**

Based on their importance as significant material resources within the Western Sandhills and High Plains region, the fifty sod houses recorded by the survey are recommended for multiple property nomination to the National Register, (see p. 67). An inventory of the properties containing sod houses, as recorded by the survey, is included on the following page.

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**Sod House Inventory for the Western Sandhills and High Plains Historic Buildings Survey**
**MORRILL COUNTY**


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MO00-018	c.1940	Sod house
MO00-024	c.1885	Withers sod house
MO00-028	c.1895	Loomis sod house
MO00-031	c.1900	Sod house
MO00-035	c.1910	Potential sod house
MO00-038	c.1885	Sod house
MO00-056	c.1910	Sod house
MO00-064	c.1908	Sod house
MO00-065	1912	Carl Nichols sod house
MO00-068	c.1910	Sod house
MO00-069	c.1905	Sod house
MO00-073	c.1910	Sod house
MO00-084	c.1912	Sod house
MO00-085	c.1908	Sod house
MO00-094	c.1908	Sod house
MO00-095	c.1903	Sod house
MO00-099	c.1905	Sod house
MO00-102	c.1888	Sod house
MO00-105	c.1913	Sod house
MO00-118	c.1900	Sod house ruins
MO00-119	c.1888	Two sod dugouts
MO00-134	1905	Sod house
MO00-140	c.1908	Sod house
MO00-143	c.1910	Greenwood Ranch sod house
MO00-148	c.1905	Sod house
MO00-165	c.1911	Sod house
MO03-001	c.1914	Sod house
MO03-054	c.1910	Sod house

**PERKINS COUNTY**


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PR00-053	c.1910	Altered sod house
PR00-065	c.1905	Sod house ruins
PR00-073	c.1905	Sod house

**KEITH COUNTY**


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KH00-065	c.1911	Sod house
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**LOGAN COUNTY**


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LO00-005	c.1900	Ranch w/Sod House
LO00-010	c.1912	Altered Sod House
LO00-012	c.1905	Ranch w/Sod House
LO00-019	c.1913	Sod House on N.C. Ranch

**MCPHERSON COUNTY**


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MP00-004	c.1907	Aban. Sod House
MP00-009	c.1912	Cumpston Sod House
MP00-013	c.1905	Sod House on Non-Contributing Ranch
MP00-015	1910	Trumbull Homestead w/Sod House
MP00-026	c.1910	Melvin Ranch w/Sod House
MP03-005	c.1907	John Seeley Sod House

**ARTHUR COUNTY**


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AT00-004	c.1910	Ranch w/Sod House
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**GARDEN COUNTY**


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GD00-067	c.1914	Ranch w/Sod House
GD00-070	c.1913	Ranch w/Sod House
GD00-071	c.1910	Sod House Ruins
GD00-072	c.1911	Aban. Sod House
GD00-073	c.1912	Ranch w/Sod House
GD00-074	c.1914	Ranch w/Sod House
GD03-029	c.1912	Sod House

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### Baled Straw Construction in the Western Sandhills and High Plains



**Fig. 9: Purported baled straw house in rural Logan County, (LO00-006).**

Seven properties with confirmed or purported baled straw construction were recorded during the survey of Arthur and Logan Counties. In addition to this, two baled straw buildings were previously recorded by the NESHPO in Arthur County: the Pilgrim Holiness Church (AT01-001), and the Ed Martin House (AT01-003). These buildings are located in two of the eight counties surveyed; no other baled straw buildings were recorded in the six remaining counties within the project area.

The nine buildings are considered extremely important historic resources for their rare and locally unique use of baled straw construction technology. In addition to this, these buildings were also considered significant for their potential association with Kinkaid Act settlement and Sand Hills Range Livestock Production agriculture.

In contrast to the construction date of the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Arthur (1928),

the era of baled straw construction was concurrent with the influx of Kinkaid Act homesteaders into the region. Along with the homesteaders came the need to build suitable houses and farm buildings. The lack of trees for log construction and the difficulty in cutting sod blocks from the sandy soil prompted claimants in the region to seek alternative building materials. With the abundant grasses which grew in the sandhills, baled straw proved to be an inexpensive and readily available building material.



**Fig. 10: Detail of baled straw house.**

The straw buildings recorded in the region consist of massive baled straw walls measuring up to twenty-four inches in thickness. Most often, a horse-drawn baler was used to tie the bales of rye straw with wire. The bales were then stacked in alternating courses and rough plastered with a mud mixture from local marshes or ponds. A final coat of stucco was then applied for the finish sheathing. In certain cases, additional coats of stucco were applied later by driving wood stakes for nailers through the original stucco and attaching a wire mesh to hold the new finish coat.

The use of baled straw construction in the Sandhills region was discussed by David

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Murphy (NESHPO) in the National Register nomination of the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Arthur County, Nebraska (May, 1979).

Baled straw construction represents a significant folk architectural response to the vast Nebraska Sandhills environment--a distinct, semi-arid ecosystem of sand dunes stabilized by grass cover and characterized by the almost total lack of traditionally suitable building materials. While materials were available locally throughout the region for sod construction, the ecology in a general sense was not suitable for its use. The Sandhills magnified the difficulties of the previous homestead lands: they were even more barren of trees and the weather was even more hostile. Furthermore, the sandy soil made poor construction sod, for if it did not disintegrate during cutting and handling, it would soon crumble after being laid up in walls.

Sandhills grasses, however, when cut and baled, and protected with stucco or plaster proved to be a suitable material capable of withstanding the environmental stresses of the region.

#### Inventory of Baled Hay Properties for the Western Sandhills and High Plains Survey

##### LOGAN COUNTY

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LO00-006 :	C.1923	Baker Ranch Baled Straw House
LO00-023 :	C.1914	Former Baled Straw House

##### ARTHUR COUNTY

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AT00-016 :	C.1914	Casey Smith Baled Straw House
AT01-001 :	1928	Pilgrim Holiness Church
AT01-003 :	1925	Ed Martin House

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## THE IMPACT OF THE KINKAID AND HOMESTEAD ACTS IN THE WESTERN NEBRASKA SAND HILLS

### Introduction

The Homestead Act, and more importantly the Kinkaid Act, had a significant impact on the settlement of the Sand Hills region. Under the patronage of these acts, the population of the Sand Hills region increased tremendously. The influx of settlers spawned an era of economic prosperity which witnessed the construction of a significant number of rural buildings. In order to satisfy the requirements of their claim, the first homesteaders and later Kinkaiders, were required to reside on their allotted claims for a specified number of years, which necessitated the construction of buildings for human and animal occupancy.



Due to the significant influence of these acts on the settlement and built environment of the western Sand Hills, a discussion of their provisions and impact follows.

### The Homestead Act of 1862

During the first two decades of the settlement of Nebraska (1855-1875), the Sand Hills

region was left largely unsettled and remained part of Nebraska's unorganized territory. The entire region was known as Sioux Indian country and official business was conducted through Cheyenne County. By the late 1870's and early 1880's, the Sand Hills area was beginning to experience its first influx of settlers. The period of initial settlement that followed (1880 to 1890), was one of generally good conditions and settlement increased at a steady rate. It was during this period that the first impact of the Homestead Act of 1862 was felt in the Nebraska Sand Hills region. The first claims filed in the Sandhills counties of the study region (Garden, Arthur, McPherson, and Logan) occurred between 1882 and 1892.

The Homestead Act of 1862 provided up to one-quarter section of "free" land (160 acres) to heads of families who had paid the \$10.00 filing fee and resided on or cultivated the land for five consecutive years. Supplemental to the Homestead Act was the Timber Culture Act approved by Congress in 1873 which provided additional one-quarter sections if the homesteader planted 40 acres of trees and maintained them for ten years.

Prior to the influx of homesteaders into the Sand Hills, a portion of the region was occupied by large cattle companies who used the public domain of the open range for cattle grazing. When the homesteaders began to stake their claims the open range land used by the cattle companies was divided into 160 to 320 acre holdings (Olson, p. 192). The majority of homesteaders, in compliance with the Act, began to cultivate the land of the northern Sand Hills. However, this proved to be an ill-fated decision due to the high susceptibility of the sand-based soil to erosion.

Once the grass covered mantle was plowed, large "blow-outs" resulted and the land which had been cultivated was rendered useless. By the end of the 1880's, the perception of the Sand Hills as an inadequate region for cultivation had been realized (Tubbs, p. 117).





In the 1890's , faced with drought, grasshoppers, and economic depression, many settlers returned east or moved further west and the area experienced its first loss in population. Because of the events of this decade, the ultimate impact of the Homestead Act in the western Sand Hills was relatively short-lived and uneventful. This however, is in marked contrast to the impact of the Act in Nebraska as a whole.

Under the impetus of the Homestead Act and other land promotions, settlers poured into the state, literally by the thousands. The population of Nebraska increased from 452,402 in 1880 to 1,058,910 in 1890, a total increase of 134% (Olson, p. 195). Also during the decade of the prosperous 1880's, twenty-six counties were organized throughout the state leaving only four counties as yet unorganized. While a great deal of credit must be given to settlement that resulted from the arrival of the railroads, it was through the Homestead Act and related federal legislation that much of Nebraska's rural lands were settled (Olson, p. 157).

Despite the statewide success of the Homestead Act, the only successful use made of

the law in the Sand Hills was by cattlemen who used it to secure stream fronts and water holes. In fact, a great deal of the Sand Hills area had never been homesteaded and was used only for open grazing (Tubbs, p. 118). The condition of the homesteaders in the Sand Hills region during the 1880's convinced much of the population that the settlement of the area under the existing Homestead or Timber Claim Acts was not satisfactory. The land which the settlers could obtain was not sufficient for sustaining a livelihood in the Sand Hills region. Even in the areas of the Sand Hills where cultivation was possible, 160 to 320 acres was simply not an adequate amount for a single-family property.

#### **Failed Settlement Legislation**

The original intent of the Homestead Act was to distribute the land in humid areas east of the 100th meridian but it made no provisions for increasing the size of the claim for those areas with insufficient rainfall or inadequate soils (Reynolds, p. 20). The desperate plight of the homesteader in the Sand Hills region gradually gained the support of regional and national politicians. In fact, prior to the drought-stricken 1890's, the Public Lands Commission of 1879 recommended a homestead on grazing lands of four square miles. Cattlemen, however, were naturally satisfied with existing conditions and the four section recommendation was never accepted.

The idea of an enlarged homestead as a means of settling the Sand Hills was revived by T.A. Fort of North Platte following the drought of 1890 (Tubbs, p. 118). Fort proposed homestead claims of two square miles (2,560 acres) with a requirement of five years residence and annual improvements on the land (Tubbs, p. 118). By 1900, Fort had interested the recently elected Congressman William Neville in his new proposal. In 1901, Neville introduced a bill to provide a two-square mile homestead but the proposal never advanced past the committee stage (Tubbs, p. 118).

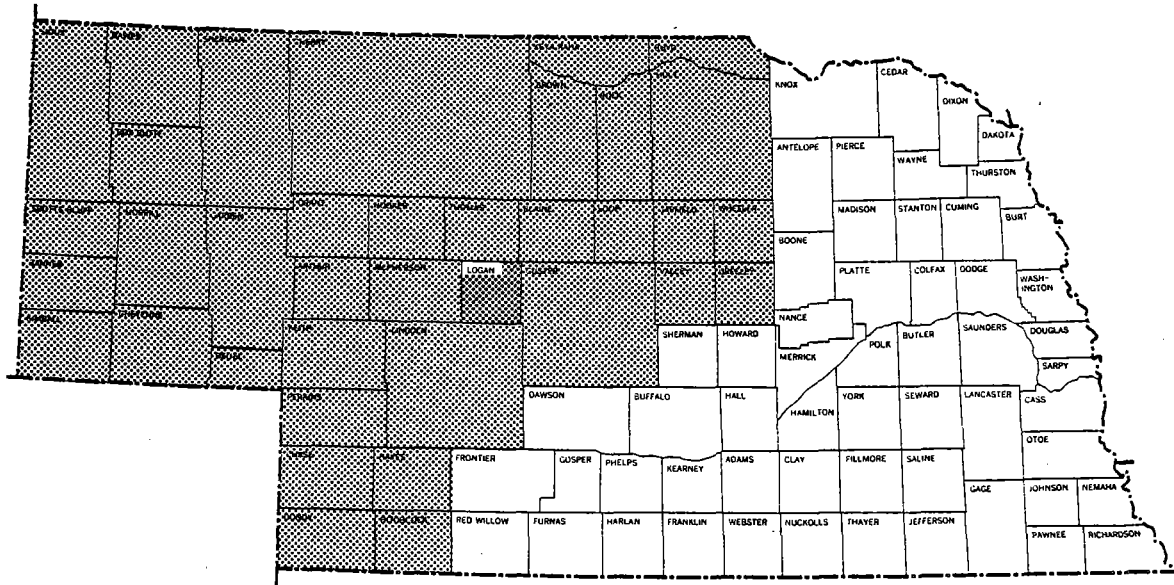
### **The Kinkaid Act of 1904**

One year later, in 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt called attention to the inadequacy of the quarter-section homestead in the arid western lands. Although Roosevelt made no specific proposals, congressional action soon followed. The leadership for this action was assumed by Moses P. Kinkaid of O'Neill, Nebraska, who had defeated Neville in the 1902 race for the sixth district congressional seat. In April 1904, Kinkaid introduced a bill to the House of Representatives which would eventually change the settlement history of much of western Nebraska. The intent of the bill was to amend the homestead laws regarding the "unappropriated and unreserved lands in Nebraska," (Reynolds, p. 21).

The bill, as presented to the Committee on Public Lands, recommended homesteads of 1,280 acres in thirty-seven Nebraska counties, to be acquired by a residence of five years and improvements of \$1.25 per acre for each acre claimed. The committee amended the bill to 640 acres and recommended it to the House on April 13, 1904, stating that the increased size of the claim would compensate homesteaders for what the land lacked in quality, (Reynolds p. 22). The report by the committee emphasized that from 1875 to 1904, the land to which the bill applied had been rejected by homesteaders who had settled only on quarter sections good enough to support cultivation. This pattern had left open for settlement the semi-arid grazing lands incapable of supporting a profitable farm on only 160 acre tracts of land (Reynolds, p. 22). The report also stated that, in numerous cases, the homesteaders who filed claims on the unsuitable areas had done so with the intention of selling out to cattlemen once they fulfilled the claim requirements. A committee was appointed to work out the differences between the two bills and after approval of both Houses, the Kinkaid Act was signed by President Roosevelt on April 28, 1904.

The final form of the bill provided homestead units of up to 640 acres and that lands

which could be irrigated should not be open to entry (Reynolds p. 23). The Kinkaid Act applied to the northwestern two-thirds of the state of Nebraska; the entire area involved was west of the 98th meridian.



**Fig. 7: Approximate area of Nebraska affected by Kinkaid Act legislation.**

When the Kinkaid Act went into effect on June 28, 1904, the area included under its provisions was served by seven United States land offices which were located at Alliance, Sidney, O'Neill, McCook, Broken Bow, North Platte, and Valentine, Nebraska. On the first day that 640-acre homesteads were available, crowds converged upon each of these local land offices to file Kinkaid claims (Reynolds, p. 23). Two years later, the *Western Nebraska Observer*, published in Kimball, reported that the houses of the Kinkaiders could be seen all over the countryside and that the settlers were filled with hopes for the future.

Between June 1904, and June 1910, some 1,600 patents were granted for approximately 800,000 acres in the area affected by the Kinkaid Act. Statistics compiled by the Department of the Interior showed a rapid increase in population between 1900 and 1910 in 31 of the 37 counties where the law was applicable. The population of these counties in

1900 was 107,434; and in 1910, 162,217; the increase was over fifty-percent in the first decade of the twentieth-century and the Kinkaid Act was in effect for only six of those years (Reynolds, p. 28).

Kinkaid claims were filed until the end of 1912 when most of the available government land had been filed upon, (Reynolds, p. 25). With the five-year residence provision, this meant the effect of the Kinkaid law was finally determinable in 1917. In addition to the patents filed from 1904 to 1910, a total of 18,919 patents were granted for 8,933,527 acres between November 1910 and the close of the 1917 fiscal year. After 1917, the acreage annually alienated rapidly declined as most homesteaders who had filed Kinkaid claims or additional entries, had completed their final proofs. However, as late as 1941, one Kinkaid patent was issued for a 40-acre additional entry. (Reynolds, p. 26).

While many of the claims were filed in good faith, the Kinkaid Act did provide the opportunity for fraudulent land schemes. In January 1905, the *Western Nebraska Observer* pointed out that many of the homesteaders had erected shanties on their claims but were not living on the premises. In the summer of 1905, the *Observer* again noted that very little in the way of improvements had been made and that only a few entryman had taken a claim in good faith with the intention of establishing a home. (Reynolds, p. 24). In 1909, the Commissioner of the General Land Office reported that in approximately twenty-five percent of the filings, the proof was found to be deficient, and perhaps fraudulent. In those cases final proof was refused.

The soddy was described as the most common and the most ideal for Kinkaid home because it was easily and cheaply constructed. The soddy was cool in summer and warm in winter which were important features in the extreme climate of western Nebraska. (Reynolds, p. 27). In March 1910, the *Observer* described the improvements on one of the better homesteads in Kimball County. The Kinkaid had lived on his claim for one year, and his

improvements, in addition to 40 fenced acres, consisted of a four-room house, a barn, a well, a hen house, and a windmill. (Reynolds, p. 24).

In 1916 the First Assistant Secretary of the Interior Department reported that dwellings of stone, cement, or frame construction, plastered and provided with conveniences, had generally supplanted the original sod dwellings of Kinkaiders. He described barns and silos that had been built for protecting livestock and storing crops.

### **Conclusion**

The Kinkaid Act of 1904 had a tremendous impact on the settlement of the Nebraska Sandhills region. Between June 1904, and June 1914, a total of 6,726,516 acres had been patented out of an approximate total of 11,000,000 acres that were opened to one-section settlement. Of the total acreage patented 6,411,963 acres were in the hands of what were termed small holders, and only 316,453 acres were in the hands of large holders, or those possessing over 2,000 acres, (Reynolds, p. 28).

The period of historic importance for this act was 1904 to approximately 1920, and during this time, the intent to disburse the unreserved lands of Nebraska had proved successful. By the end of 1916, seventy-two percent of the acres claimed were still owned by the original filing parties.

Through the promoted development of the lands, the Kinkaid Act had increased the population and advanced the public welfare in the Sandhills region of Nebraska.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

Throughout the duration of the Logan County survey, random observations were recorded concerning historic context themes which appear potentially significant based on their extant material resources. The general impressions recorded by the survey team were then combined with a post-survey analysis of all documented properties to determine recommendations for future work. The recommendations include National Register nominations as presented in the Preliminary Inventory (see p. 19-49) and suggestions for historic context development.

### Potential Historic Context Reports

The potential Agriculture Historic Context reports identified by the survey include Sand Hills Range Livestock Production (H.C.: 08.08), and Loess Hills Livestock, General Farming, and Cash Grain Production. A summary of the major components of these agriculture types is found in the Agriculture inventory starting on page 23. The number of associated properties and the importance of agriculture to the region and state makes this an apparent choice.

In addition, two Settlement related contexts appear significant with regard to the surveyed properties in Logan County: Dwelling in Dispersed and Clustered Settlement (H.C.: 16.05) and Land Ownership: The Kinkaid Act of 1904 (H.C.: 16.01). The impact of the Kinkaid and Homestead Acts on the settlement of the western Sandhills is discussed further on pages 59 through 66.

Other topics of potential multiple property development include the study of native material buildings in Logan County. This study would focus upon further research of sod and baled straw buildings identified by the survey. For a more detailed discussion of the buildings related to sod and baled straw construction, please refer to page 50.

## Conclusion

It is the belief of those associated with this project that people, and the places in which they live, are the raw materials of history. A community, its inhabitants and its development through time are proper subjects for our contemplation, for it is through such studies that we gain a fuller comprehension of the present. The value of cultural material studies and preservation of historic buildings was politically expressed on a national level in 1966 by Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine as he addressed the eighty-ninth Congress of the United States regarding the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act.

"In less than 200 years, America has grown from a sparsely populated agricultural community of States to the most urbanized and technologically advanced Nation in the world. During these 20 decades and before, American genius has created marvels of mortar and stone... In the next four decades alone, our expanding population and urbanization will require more construction than we have witnessed during our first 20 decades. This means that much of what we have created to date is threatened by the thrust of bulldozers or the corrosion of neglect. In many instances, efforts to preserve sites of architectural and historic value will be too late. America must move promptly and vigorously to protect the important legacies which remain. This we can achieve without blunting our progress. And this achievement will enrich our progress. With sensitive planning, the past and the future can live as neighbors and contribute jointly to the quality of our civilization."

In the year 1990, America has now passed the halfway point in the four decade period of expansion delineated by Senator Muskie. Have we achieved the balance of preserving our past while progressing toward the future? In some cases we have, but in many others we have not. This is not to say that all older buildings are worthy of preservation. Many of the older buildings which stand in the path of necessary expansion have rightfully been removed. However, the heightening of public awareness and the education of our elected public officials towards the concept of historic preservation is a topic not open to subjectivity. It is imperative that the documentation and review of threatened historic



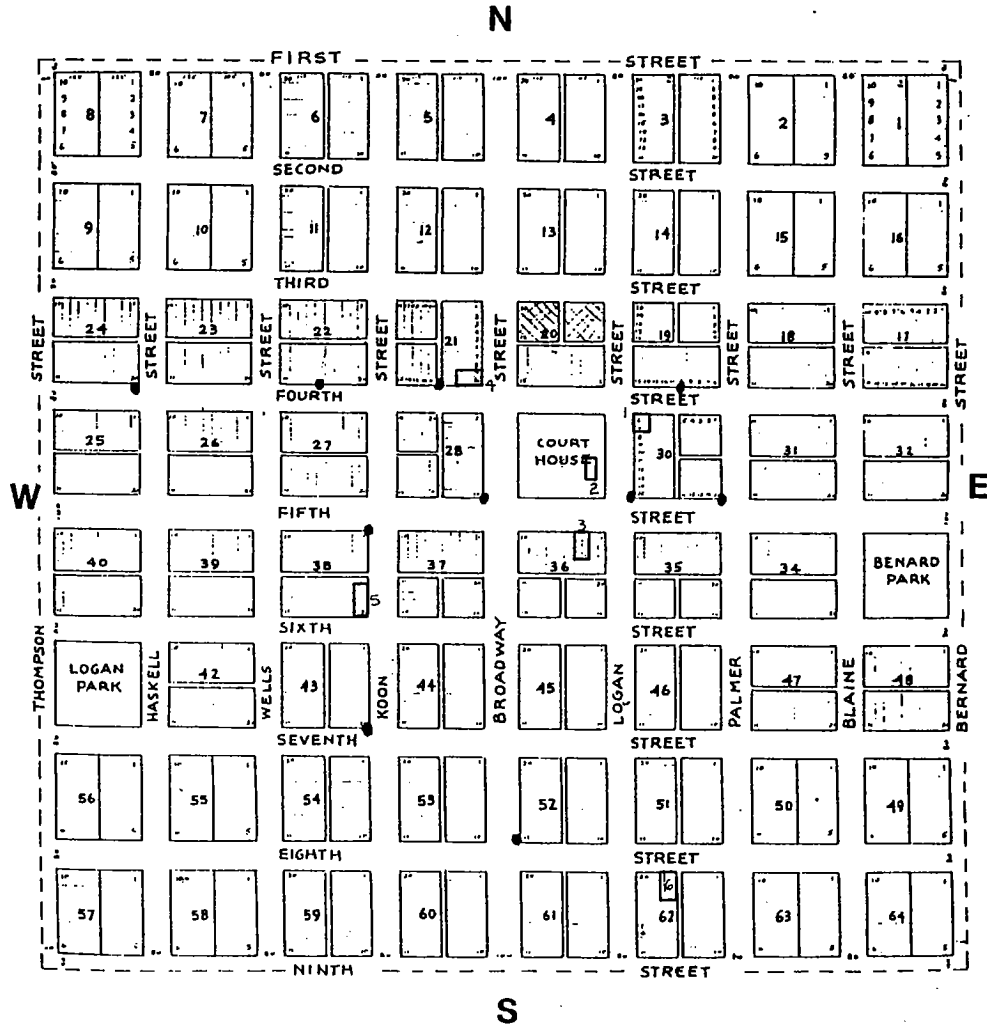
buildings be conducted and appropriate decisions be made regarding the cultural value of historic buildings. It is toward this goal that the Western Sandhills and High Plains region has been researched and documented. It is the hope of those involved with this project that the historic properties within the region will be enjoyed by many future generations of Nebraska citizens.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: Logan County Town and Rural Inventory Listings of All Surveyed Properties

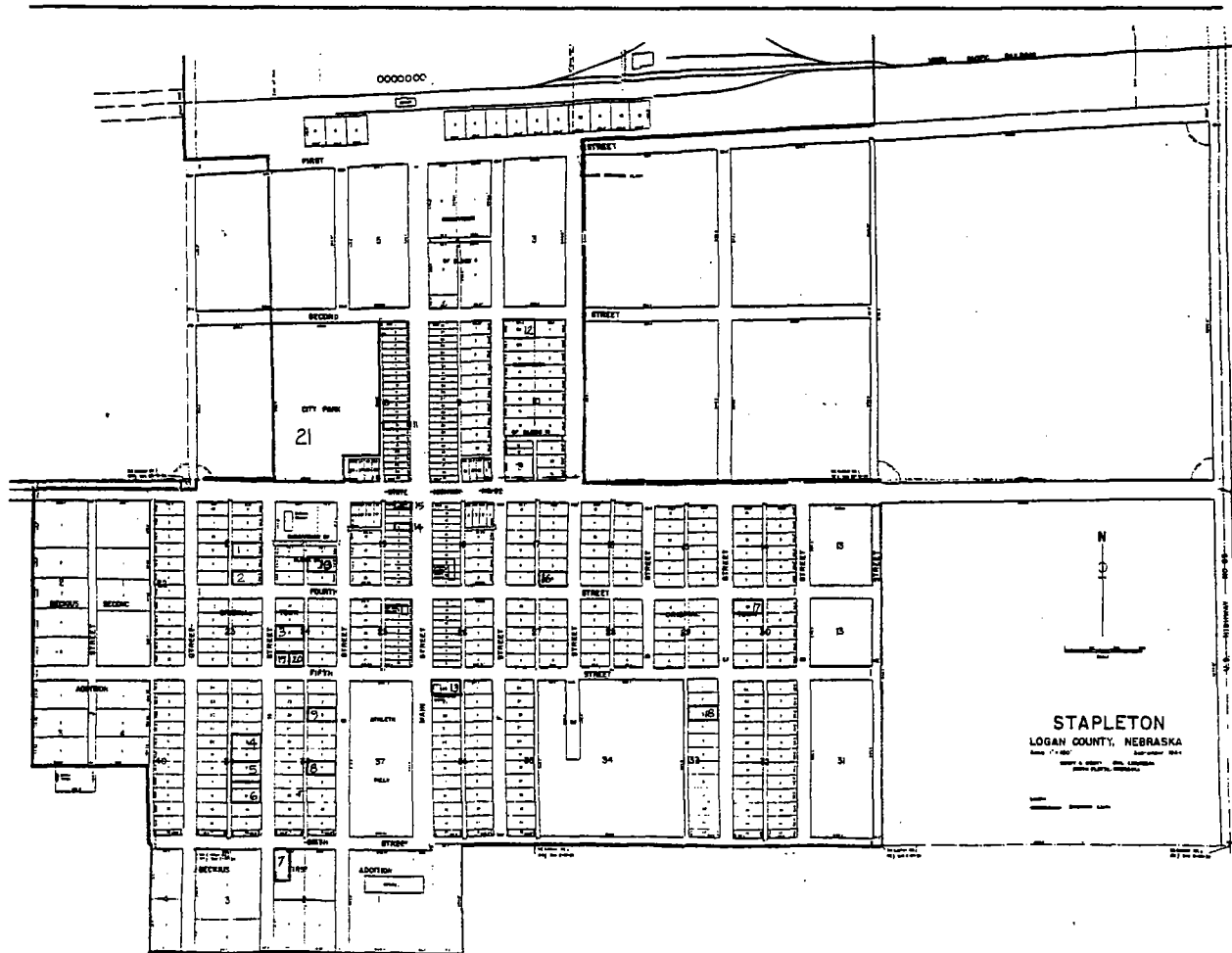
## L000: LOGAN COUNTY RURAL INVENTORY

NEHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/Common NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING				PROPERTY TYPE	DOE
				BLDG.	SITES	STRU.	OBJ.		
L000-001	C1905	RANCH	08.08	4	0	0	3	08.1	C
L000-002	C1889	ABAN. RANCH	16.05	1	0	1	1	16.5.1	C
L000-003	C1920	FARM	08.08	5	0	0	3	08.1	C
L000-004	C1910	RANCH	08.08	3	0	0	2	08.1	C
L000-005	C1900	RANCH w/SOD HOUSE	16.05	4	0	0	2	08.1, 11.4.3:1	E
L000-006	C1923	RANCH w/BALED HAY HOUSE	08.08	5	0	0	2	08.1, 11.4.3:6	E
L000-007	C1900	HOUSE ON N.C. RANCH	08.08	1	0	0	1	16.5.1	C
L000-008	C1907	RANCH	16.05	1	0	2	1	08.1	C
L000-009	C1901	RANCH	08.04	6	0	0	2	08.1	C
L000-010	C1912	ALTERED SOD HOUSE	08.04	1	0	0	0	16.5.1, 11.4.3:1	C
L000-011	C1910	ABAN. RANCH	08.04	3	0	0	1	08.1	C
L000-012	C1905	RANCH w/SOD HOUSE	08.04, 16	7	0	0	0	08.1, 11.4.3:1	E
L000-013	C1907	ABAN. RANCH HOUSE	08.04	3	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L000-014	C1904	ABAN. RANCH HOUSE	08.04	6	0	0	2	16.5.1	C
L000-015	C1907	RANCH	08.04	7	0	0	1	08.1	C
L000-016	C1918	RANCH HOUSE	08.04	3	0	1	1	16.5.1	C
L000-017	C1895	RANCH	08.04	4	0	0	0	08.1	E
L000-018	C1893	ABAN. RANCH	08.04	6	0	0	2	08.1	P
L000-019	C1913	SOD HOUSE ON N.C. RANCH	16.05	1	0	0	0	16.5.1, 11.4.3:1	E
L000-020	C1901	RANCH	16.05	4	0	0	0	08.1	P
L000-021	C1910	RANCH	08.04	4	0	0	0	08.1	C
L000-022	C1925	RANCH	08.04	5	0	0	0	08.1	P
L000-023	C1914	FORMER BALED HAY HOUSE	16.05	1	0	0	0	16.5.1, 11.4.3:6	E



LO01: GANDY, LOGAN COUNTY INVENTORY

NEHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/Common NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	CONTRIBUTING BLDG. SITE	STRU. OBJ.	PROPERTY TYPE	DOE
LO01-001	C1880	ABAN. COMMERCIAL BLDG.	12.02.04	1	0 0 0	12.1	P
LO01-002	C1908	FORMER LOGAN COUNTY JAIL	04.03	1	0 0 0	04.3.2	P
LO01-003	C1895	HOUSE	16.05	3	0 0 0	16.5.1	C
LO01-004	C1890	GANDY CASH STORE/I.O.O.F.	12.02.04	1	0 0 0	12.1.3	P
LO01-005	C1905	HOUSE	16.05	1	0 0 0	16.5.1	C
LO01-006	1930	LOGAN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL	06.01.04	1	0 0 0	06.3.5	P



LO02: STAPLETON, LOGAN COUNTY INVENTORY

NEHBS NUMBER	DATE	RESOURCE/COMMON NAME	HISTORIC CONTEXT	BLDG	CONTRIBUTING SITE	STRU.	OBJ.	PROPERTY TYPE	DOE
L003-001	C1905	HOUSE	16.05	2	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-002	C1917	HOUSE	16.05	2	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-003	C1920	HOUSE	16.05	1	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-004	C1905	HOUSE	16.05	3	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-005	C1921	HOUSE	16.05	2	0	0	0	16.5.1	P
L003-006	C1920	HOUSE	16.05	1	0	0	0	16.5.1	P
L003-007	C1895	HOUSE	16.05	4	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-008	C1915	HOUSE	16.05	2	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-009	C1913	HOUSE	16.05	1	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-010	C1903	HOUSE	16.05	2	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-011	C1887	ABAN. COMMERCIAL BLDG.	12.02.04	1	0	0	0	12.1.1	C
L003-012	C1881	ABAN. LUMBER COMPANY	12.02.04	2	0	0	0	11.4.2:1	P
L003-013	1931	UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH	02.04.01	1	0	0	0	02.1.4	C
L003-014	C1910	FORMER CITY MAINTENANCE BLDG.	04.02	1	0	0	0	04.1.5	P
L003-015	C1927	POST OFFICE	04.06	1	0	0	0	04.2.3	E
L003-016	C1903	HOUSE	16.05	1	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-017	C1901	HOUSE	16.05	1	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-018	C1901	HOUSE	16.05	1	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-019	C1919	HOUSE	16.05	1	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-020	C1923	HOUSE	16.05	1	0	0	0	16.5.1	C
L003-021	1939	CITY PARK	07.06	0	1	0	1	07.5.1	C

GLOSSARY

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This Glossary lists architectural styles common in Nebraska during the mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Style names are followed by dates suggesting the general time span, and brief descriptions identifying characteristic features. These summaries were defined by the NESHPO and included in their publication "Historic Places: The National Register for Nebraska" (NEBRASKAland, Jan.-Feb., 1989).

**Italianate 1870-1890**

A popular style for houses, these square, rectangular, or L-shaped two-story buildings have low-pitched hip roofs, with wide eaves usually supported by heavy brackets, tall narrow windows, and front porches. In some cases, the roof may be topped with a cupola.

**Queen Anne 1880-1900**

A style which enjoyed widespread popularity in the state, these two-story houses have asymmetrical facades and steeply pitched rooflines of irregular shape. Characteristics include a variety of surface textures on walls, prominent towers, tall chimneys, and porches with gingerbread trim.

**County Capitol 1880-1910**

This was a popular form for courthouses in the state and was inspired by the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C. Usually situated on a courthouse square, these square-shaped monumental buildings exhibit corner pavilions, a prominent central domed tower, and Neo-Classical or Romanesque styling.

**Romanesque Revival 1880-1920**

These buildings are of masonry construction and usually show some rough-faced stonework. The Roman or round-topped arch is a key feature. Facades are asymmetrical and most examples have towers, brick corbelling and horizontal stone banding.

**Late Gothic Revival 1880-1930**

A later version of the Gothic style, these buildings are generally larger and use heavy masonry construction. In churches, masonry is sometimes used throughout the structure. The pointed-arch window opening remains a key feature, however designs are more subdued than those of the earlier period.

GLOSSARY

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**Eclectic 1890-1910**

An eclectic building displays a combination of architectural elements from various styles. It usually resulted when a house designed in one architectural style was remodeled.

**Shingle 1890-1920**

Characteristics include a two-story asymmetrical house with hip, gable, or gambrel roof; walls covered wholly or in part with wood shingles; little or no ornamentation; and extensive porches.

**Neo-Classical Revival 1900-1920**

Front facades are usually dominated by a full-height porch with the roof supported by classical columns. Symmetrically arranged buildings show monumental proportions, balanced windows, and a central entry.

**Renaissance Revival 1900-1920**

The style is characterized by formalism in plans, raised basements, low hipped roofs covered with clay tiles, symmetrical facades with wide overhanging eaves, arched entries and second story porches. Window treatments vary from story to story and are flat or round arched.

**Georgian or Colonial Revival 1900-1930**

A style characterized by a symmetrical facade enriched with classical detail, gable or hip roof, and eaves detailed as classical cornices. The standard window is rectangular with a double-hung sash. The Palladian window is often used as a focal point.

**Spanish Colonial Revival 1900-1920**

These buildings, which have a southwestern flavor, show masonry construction usually covered with plaster or stucco, red-tiled hipped roofs, and arcaded porches. Some facades are enriched with curvilinear and decorated roof lines.

**Prairie 1900-1930**

This movement, popularized by Frank Lloyd Wright, emphasized the integration of a building and its site. Elements of the style include a low-pitched roof line with wide overhanging eaves, two stories high with one-story porch, and an overall horizontal emphasis in the design.

GLOSSARY

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**Period 1920-1930**

Influenced by the styles of medieval English and French country cottages, these houses are usually of two stories and display irregular massing, steeply pitched roofs with slate or clay tile covering, massive chimneys, half-timbering, casement windows, and attached garages.

**Modernistic 1930-1940**

Art Deco, the earlier Modernistic phase, was used primarily for public and commercial buildings and is characterized by angular composition, with towers and vertical projections and smooth wall surfaces with stylized and geometric motifs, including zigzags and chevrons. Art Moderne, the later version, shows smooth wall finishes without surface ornamentation, asymmetrical facades with a horizontal emphasis, flat roofs, rounded corners, and bands of windows or curved window glass creating a streamlined effect.

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